NEHEMIAH

THE

Tirshatha:

OR, THE

CHARACTER

OF A

Good Commissioner.

To which is Added

GRAPES

IN THE

Wilderness.

By Mr. THOMAS BELL, Minister of the Gospel, and Professor of Philology in the Colledge of *Edinburgh*.

EDINBURGH,
Printed by *George Mosman*, and are to be sold at his Shop in the *Parliament Close*. *Anno* 1692.

Apud Edinburgum.

Vicesimo primo die Aprilis 1691. *post Meridiem.*

THE whilk day the *Commission* appointed by the late *General Assembly* of this Church, having considered a Report from a Committee of their own number, whom the said Commission had appointed to Revise two Manuscripts, written by the late Reverend Mr. *Thomas Bell*, Minister of the Gospel, and Professor of Philology in the Colledge of *Edinburgh*, and given in to them by his Relick; the one whereof is intituled, *Grapes in the Wilderness*, the other, *Nehemiah the Tirshatha*, or *The Character of a good Commissioner*; whereby the said Committee declared that they having perused the saids Peices, they judged them to be solid and edifying Discourses; and that the Printing thereof would be very useful and profitable. And the said Commission being well and ripely advised with the said Report, They do hereby recommend to the Relick of the said Mr. *Thomas Bell*, to get the said two Pieces printed and published with all convenient diligence. *Extractum*, &c.

UNTO THE

Most Noble and Illustrious

PRINCESS

THE

Dutchess of Hamiltoun.

May it please your Grace,

I Have adventured, though not without blushing and some fear, because of the vast distance, to dedicate and commit the Tutelage of these two little Orphan treatises of my deceast Husband Mr *Thomas Bell*, *Grapes in the Wilderness*, and *The Character of a Commissioner*,

in

in the person of None-such *Nehemiah*, to your Grace the every way most fit and proper Person, under the benign influence of whose incouraging countenance, he did for a considerable time preach the *Gospel* at *Hamiltoun*: And indeed if any other in the World could possibly rival it with your Grace in my esteem, yet could I not without the highest both Injustice and Ingratitude Dedicate them otherwayes, it having been to my certain knowledge his firm resolution, if ever they saw the light, that they should be dedicated thus, whose will in all

such

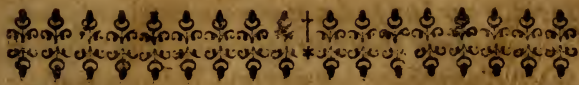
ſuch things was alwayes, and is ſtill to me as an inviolably obliging Law. I am very confident your Grace will read them in Print after his death, with the ſame edifying complacency and delight that you had wont to hear him diſcourſe by *vive voice*, in the Noble Family, and in the ſolemne Aſſembly, for really they reſemble their Father to the very life; That I have therefore ſent them abroad into the wide World, under the Patronage and Protection of your Graces Noble and Renowned Name, (which will ſufficiently ſecure them againſt all the Cenſures &

Cavills of the most malevolent Carpers of this ill natured Age) will not be construed impardonable presumption, is the humble hope of,

Most Noble Princess,

Your Graces most humble, most obliged, and most devoted Servant,

L. R.



TO THE

READER.

Christian Reader,

THE *Discoveries that the Majesty of* GOD, *hath made of himself, in these latter dayes, are so transcendent, and eminently beyond what was in former Ages, that it may truly be said, that the* Men *of this* Generation, *shall be signally indebted, either to the* Grace *and* Mercy, *or Justice of God.* For *in former Ages, the Light was comparatively dark, & the Sun but rising in our Horizon: But in this Age, the light of the* Moon *(compared with former Generations) is like the light of the Sun, & the light of the Sun sevenfold, as the light of seven dayes. But alas! our not*

walking in the light, may justly provoke the Lord *to cause our Sun go down at noon.* Beza *complained in his time that there was* multum Scientiæ *much Knowledge, but* parum Conscientiæ, *little Conscience; and how much more is there ground for this* Complaint *now? For since the Primitive and Apostolick Age, greater light hath not broken forth, and moe Stars of the first and greatest magnitude, have not more clearly shined in any age:* But *oh! how little walking is there sutable to such great light? How many eminent* Christians *were there in former ages, who had not so much all their dayes of the riches of free* Grace *discovered, and of the mysteries of the Gospel unfolded, as some in this Generation have had in a very little time, who have far surpassed us in this Generation, for eminency in Faith,* Love, *Holy Zeal, Prayer, and Wrestling with God, Patience,* Meekness, *diligence in duty, and a Gospel adorning conversation? And the generality have shut their eyes, and will not behold the Glory of God, manifested in the face of Jesus* Christ, *in this Gospel: For which cause, the holy and jealous God in great anger and holy Indignation, hath removed many and eminent* Candlesticks *out of their place, and taken away many shining and burning*

lights:

lights: not in their old age, and gray Hairs, but even in the flower of their age, and in the prime and flowrishing of their Graces and Gifts. One of which was the Reverend (now Triumphant and Glorified) Author of these following Treatises. who was eminent for Piety and Learning, as his Writtings do manifest. His Roman *Antiquities, which he published before his death, cannot but commend his Learning to all knowing persons, and his* Piety *was so eminent to all that knew him, that he needs none of our* Commendation: *And these his Works (which are a specimen of his great Knowledge, Eloquence, piety and solid Judgement) will praise him in the gate, where he draws a* Vive Picture *and* Patern *for all, but especially for* Rulers *and Magistrates to look on, and walk after, Which I am hopeful will be very acceptable to all the Judicious and* Godly. *He I say was taken away in the flower of his Age, & flowrishing of his Gifts:* God *not accounting the* World *worthy of him. And having left amongst his* Papers, *these two* Treatises *(one of which was formerly published by a privat* Person, *but without the knowledge and advice of the* Authors Friends) *some of his* Friends, *lovers of the publick* Good, *judged it expe-*

expedient to review and correct these Treatises that they might be published for the good and edification of the Church, that he by them (though dead) might speak. Which we hope shall through Gods blessing, be very edifying, for overthrowing of Atheism, *discovering of the Souls happiness in Union and Communion with God, directing great Persons in their duty, and holding forth the excellency of the Scripture, and pointing out to these who are walking in this Wilderness the way to the Heavenly* Canaan, *with many other edifying purposes; which that the Great God may bless, is the earnest Prayer of.*

Thy Servant in the Work
of the Gospel.

M. C.

NEHEMIAH THE Tirshatha: OR, THE CHARACTER OF A Good Commissioner.

THE Scripture casteth such a light of Divinity every way, its Purpose being the Mind of God, its Writting the Writting of God; its whole the Oracles of God, and every part of it the faithful Sayings of God, that it is hid to none *but those that perish, whose eyes the God of this World hath blinded*: So absurd a thing is *Atheism*, that even those who serve the Devil cannot want their God. At the Birth of *Jesus* there appeared a Star in the East, which guided the Wise-men (by their Presents seeming to have been Greatmen) to the place where the Child

was: But the Scripture, like the Sun, is the great Light that ruleth the day of the Gospel, circling the World as long as the Sun, and continuing while the Moon endureth. Rom: 10. 17. *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God: But I say, have they not heard? yes verily, their sound went out into all the Earth, and their words unto the Worlds end.* In the Creation the first-born Light of the first day, lasting but three dayes concentred and ceased in the enduring Luminaries the product of the fourth day: So in the Regeneration, the light of Christs personal Preaching, lasting just as many Prophetical dayes, *Dan.* 9. 27. hath given place to the Scripture-light that endureth for ever, *and the sure word of Prophecy, to which we do well to take heed, as to a Light that shineth in a dark place.* This is the Light that maketh all things manifest, even the thoughts and intents of the Heart, that discovereth all things to Men, and a Man to himself, both what he is, and what he ought to be: And *what manner of persons ought we to be?* 2 *Pet.* 23, 11. Truly this Light is sweet, and intertaineth us with variety of delightful Objects: Amongst which, of late, happening to be detained with these last words of *Nehemiah*, and seeing them like a well done Portrait, in all stances looking towards me with an eye of instruction, walking and returning, and still more desireously beholding, hardly could I be satisfied with a *sixth* View.

Remember me O my God for good. Nehem. 13. last.

THESE words at the very first view do clearly hold forth, That *There is a God.* And that both by

by an expreſs Teſtimony of his bleſſed Name, that is heard in all the Scripture, and ſeen in all his Works: *The Man of Wiſdom ſhall ſee thy Name.* Mic. 6. 9. And by force of Reaſon, from the inclination and motion of the Soul, which finding nothing but emptineſs at home, goeth forth in queſt of Happineſs, and but ſharpening its deſires with all that is imperfect, is ſatisfied only with a perfect Good: And that is God. So uuhappy by neceſſity is every one that is Ungodly. The *Pythagorean* and *Hermetick* Method of Silence is the beſt Inſtructer of this Truth, which every Man may read off his own Soul. *Be ſtill and know that I am God.* How ſhall I know that? By my own Deſires and Expectations, which can take up with no other thing. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and on Earth what deſire I beſide thee? And now Lord what wait I for? my hope is in thee.* If a raving Stoick, or a petulant Dialogiſt, ſhall ſay that theſe Soul-ardors are but the intemperat extravagant heats of a working Fancy quickned by the touch of a Platonick Idea, rather to be ſtarved to extinction than indulged to ſatisfaction: It is Anſwered ſeriouſly, That *difficile eſt hominem exuere.* Or can any of them by an alley of Fancy quiet an earning Stomack, or cure a feveriſh Body, let be (without quenching the Spirit, and ſtarving the Soul) ſtill otherwiſe than by Satisfaction, and enjoyment of the deſired Object, theſe Soul-longings and Deſires, which are ever ſtrongeſt and moſt eager in the greateſt ſerenity? *With my Soul have I deſired thee in the night: by night upon my Bed, I ſought him whom my Soul loved*: And *the Lord is in the ſtill voice*: To make good the Argument, let it

be

be added, That the Sageſt, Holyeſt, Nobleſt Souls are alwayes the hotteſt in this purſuit, ſuch as *Paul*, *Iſay*, *Nehemiah*, *David*. Now after what is the King of *Iſrael* come out? after what doth he purſue? after a Flea? after a Fancy? or ſhould a wiſe Man utter vain knowledge, and (like *Simon Patricks Pilgrim*) fill his Belly with the Eaſt-wind? Now ſhall any Man be ſo unmerciful to conclude all the World unavoidably miſerable, that they may be *Atheiſts*? or ſhall they be ſo unwiſe, thus to be abuſed, to the hazarding even of a poſſibility of Happineſs? For if there be Happineſs, there is a God; and if there be no God, there can be no Happineſs. And *why then are all Men made in vain*? If there be no Meat, for what do we Hunger? if no Drink, what do we Thirſt for? if no Glory, (ſaith *Cicero*) for what do all Men labour? if no Reſt, why weary we our ſelves in vain? if no God, no Happineſs, what is this our Souls do ſo importunately purſue, with a ſerious loathing of all that is ſeen? or what hath wakened in them thoſe deſires that can never be ſtilled till they get what they ſeek. And what ſay theſe Soul-longings, Thirſtings, Pantings, Breathings, but that ere thou beeſt an *Atheiſt*, thou muſt put out the Soul, and put off the Man?

How ſeaſonable may this Reflection be in a World where *Atheiſm* is acted in ſo various Guiſes: by ſome with a Fools Heart in a Fools Coat, ſaying in his Heart, There is no God; by others in a Philoſophers Garment; for in the judgement of God, *The World by wiſdom knew not God*; by ſome in the dreſs of a Hypocrite, *In words profeſſing to know God, but in*

works

works denying him; By others in the person of *Amphiryo* thinking that God is altogether such a one as himself: By some in *Epicurus* his person, complementing God with the Kingdom of Heaven, and offering to relieve him of the abaseing pensive and expensive charge of these his Low Countries, saying, *He will neither do Good nor Evil*; "But "he is a God *that judgeth in the Earth*: By others in the Robs of *Pharaoh* the *Egyptian* Tyrant, braving and defying God; *Who is the Lord that I should obey him, or harken to his voice*? By some in the Pontificalls of Antichrist "With a Mouth speaking "great things against the most High, boasting him-"self that he is God, exalting himself above all that "is called God, or is Worshiped: By others in the Equipage of a Souldier fighting against God with Wit and Power, Pen and Sword. But let such as Make War against the holy Covenant and Saints of the most High; that hate the Gospel, and hinder the Preaching thereof, take *Gamaleels* counsel, and beware "lest they be found even to *fight* "*against God*: For there is neither Counsel nor "Strength against the Lord; and who ever hard-"ned himself against him and prospered?

The Second View of these Words presents to us clearly, *The Immortality of the Soul.* This is establisht 1. Upon the same ground with the former: For if the Souls Happiness ly in the enjoyment of a perfect, and so necessarly an unchangeable Good, it must undeniably be Immortal, both to enjoy and praise its Object: *Et miserum est fuisse felicem*: There is no Happiness not perpetual, else he was a Fool

who spoiled his Mirth with the thoughts of a Sword hanging over his head. 2. It is confirmed clearly by the expectation of a future Reward: *Remember me O my God for good.* Till I see good Ropes twined of the Sand, and the Sea beaten to powder, I cannot be inclined to think that the World was made of Atoms. And if it be ruled by chance, what are Counsel and Art, Wisdom and Folly, Good and Evil, Law and Justice, but names of Fancies, large as ridiculous as he who should command the motes of the Sun to dance a Measure, or he who scourged the Sea for its disorder? We know that pure chance obtaineth impunity by the Law both of God and Man. Now this matter belongeth to the Ruler gravly to consider, how inconsistent Atheism is with Government: For to the Atheist Treason and Robbery is neither Plot nor Fellony, but simple chance medley, a *French* Aire, or merry Jigg of Volage Atoms: But by this fortuitous Act of Indemnity, as the Atheist can do no wrong, so neither can he complain of injury, if he chance to be baffled, robbed, or dispatched violently. If the World reel (I cannot say properly be ruled) by chance, is not the Atheist, not by Scripture only which never speaks good of him, but by his own Principles also proven a forlorn Fool, lyable in all things to unavoidable surprisal? yea a liar also, who knowing and warned of a continual surprisal, can therefore never be surprised, except into the absurdity of a Self-contradiction, whereof his Principles of Fortuity are a fair Essay. But to a wise Man; If the World must be ruled by Counsel and Law; how is it that Justice is not in this life universally and fully executed, and every

Man

Man rewarded according to his Works? But that there is a Court of Referrs, *A day of the restitution of all things* ἀποκαταστάσεως πάντων, of righting all wrongs and settling all disorders. *Rom.* 2. 6. to 13. Some are rewarded in this life, to convince us of a Divine Providence; others are not rewarded, to warn us of a World to come. Or what can perswade *Nehemiah* with all the wisest and best of Men, deliberately to chuse willingly to forgo the Worlds favour and pleasures, and undergo all its toil and displeasure, but an eye to the recompence of reward, by far more the better than it is the later? The sence of the Souls Immortality is the indelible Character and solid Treats of Authentick Nature, exactly rendered in every Man's coppy: Only it is not illuminated in some dark Hereticks and desperate Monsters, Satyres or such doleful Creatures in humane shape, where you see as little of the Man as of Immortality; for these in all appear equally. Yet it is shaddowed in all Mens practice: For look we backward, What but the Aire of Immortality maketh Men so conceit an ancient Pedegree? Or foreward, What moveth Men to call their Children and Lands by their own Name, and to endeavour to perpetuat all together, but the expectation of Immortality? Say it is their vanity; yet *omne malum est in bono*; and there must be some reality under that same vanity. And truly the Souls Immortality is the early dictat of Nature our Religious Mother, the uncontroverted and universal Sentiment of all her posterity of whatsoever Religion *Jewish, Pagan, Christian, Mahumetan*: The *Sadducees* might well be the first Deniers,

but Christ was not the first Deviser or Asserter of the Souls Immortality: Yea that with the different states of Rewards may be traced to furthest antiquity. A 3*d*. Argument in the words for the Souls Immortality is, the divine Comprehension of its Faculties and Acts, reaching in one present view things past and to come, and herein highly resembling the Eternity of the *Father of Spirits*, who in a perfect present reaching from the Beginning to the End, ruleth all differences of times. Can the Soul be at the reverence of time, or subject to its consuming envy, which at one fetch can bring together times past and to come? Doth the Soul wax old and wear with the Body? Or, to the observation of any, doth it not often gain by the Bodies loss? For "as the outward Man perisheth, the in-"ward Man is renewed day by day. Or, as the Body wasteth with sickness and infirmity, shall the Soul dye of health and strength? Hath not the Atom-stowr and dust of materiality blinded his eyes who cannot see the absurdity of such a fancy?

But yet the necessity of the Souls immortality may be seen more clearly in its excellent usefulness to Men. For 1. It directeth them in their choise. 1. Of things. Is the Soul immortal: Then "seek we the Kingdom of God, the better part "that cannot be taken from us, the Water of Life, "the Meat that endureth to Life eternal, the hid-"den Manna, the enduring Substance, the Trea-"sure in Heaven, the things that are not seen, which "neither eye hath seen, nor the ear heard of, nei-"ther hath it entered in the heart of Man to con-

"ceive,

"ceive, what God hath laid up for these that love "him. Thou art my portion O Lord: and, whom "have *I* in heaven but thee, or upon the earth what "is there that I desire beside thee? For all other things will fail me, yea and I will fail my self; "my heart and my flesh faileth; but "thou art the strength of my heart, and my por-"tion for ever. 2. Of wayes: every way leads not to our choyce: "there is a Path the end where-"of is the way of Death: But thou wilt shew me "the Paith of Life: and that lyes in the way of Gods Commandments: *I have chosen the way of thy Commandments.* Ps. 1. last, *The way of the ungodly shall perish*, and Psal. 2. last. *They shall perish from the way.* But *Psal*; 139, last, *Their is a way everlasting*; and that *Psal*; 19, 9. *The fear of the Lord, is a clean way*, a cleansing way, *and indureth for ever. Enter ye in at the strait gate* &c. *It is the strait gate*, true; but it is the streight gate, *the high way of the upright*; *It* is the *Afflicted gate* τεθλιμμενη ὁδος Mat. 7, 14. *But it leadeth unto Life.* Let Papists talk of Prosperity, and *Sectaries* boast of success and signal Providences, the afflicted way is Christs way. Therefore let no man be so simple as to say, *if the Lord be with us, how have all these things befallen us? Moses* the man of God, who was Honoured to be the *Mediator* of the old Testament, and *to guide Israel like a flock*, was better acquainted with the way, *who chused to suffer affliction with the People of God Heb*; 11, 25. Indeed we should Pray for the peace of *Jerusalem*, That *they may prosper that love her*; *Psal*: 118, 25. *Save now I beseech thee,*

O Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee send now prosperity: Yet *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer Persecution*, and *through much Tribulation we must enter into the Kingdom of God.* But let no man add affliction to the afflicted, and scornfully with Apostate *Julian*, alledge to Christians this Doctrine, to make their burdens heavier: *God will not be mocked*, but *He will avenge his own Elect, who cry day and night to him, Though he bear long with them: I tell you that he will avenge them speedily*, Luke 18. 7, 8. And men would remember, that there is Suffering for evil-doing, as well as for well-doing; and he who inflicts the one, may be rewarded with the other: *For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the Wine is red, it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same; but the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them*, Psal. 75. 8. And *it is a righteous thing with God, to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance*, &c. 2 *Thess.* 1. 6, 7, 8. 2. The belief of the Souls Immortality, teacheth men effectually the Fear of God: *Fear not them that kill the Body, and when they have done that have no more that they can do: But fear ye him who can cast both Soul and Body into Hell; I say fear him*, Luke 12. 4, 5 Psal. 76. 11. *He ought to be feared*: And why? verse 12. *He cutteth off the Spirits of Princes, he is terrible to the Kings of the Earth. Who would not fear thee, O King of Nations! For to thee doth it appertain*, Jer. 10. 7. 3. It teacheth moderation in the desire and use of all things

things worldly: "We look not at the things that "are seen, which are Temporal, but at the things "that are not seen, which are Eternal. There is indeed the high spirit of Christianity courting immortality with so great disdain of all Worldly things, that it cannot see them in its way. This is the true Nobility of the Soul that exempteth it from the *Egyptian* slavery and servil drudgery *of loading it self with thick clay* for the brick-kilns of worldly projects; and setteth it far without the reach of this Temptation, "And woe be to him who "buildeth his House by Blood, and his City by "Oppression; and delivereth it from the *share* of him, "Who will be Rich, till He be peirced "with many Sorrows and drowned in Damnati-"on. But, this I say Brethren, the time is short; even short enough to him who every Evening may hear, "This night thy Soul shall be taken "from thee: It remaineth, That they who pos-"sess the World be as they possessed it not, they "that use it, as if they used it not, and as not abu-"sing it; for the fashion of this World passeth a-"way, 1 *Cor.* 7. 29. and foreward. But alas for pitty that this same Moderation and Indifferency should be both practised and applauded in the matters of God! And that it is so rare to be Seriously and positively Holy, that Godliness may say, "O "ye Sons of Men, how long will ye turn my "Glory into Shame? How long will ye love Va-"nity, and seek after Leasing? *Psal.* 4. 2. 4. *It* teacheth us the best managry. This Age hath learned to be wonderful Thrifty: But O that they

could ſtudy to *be rich toward God*! And could be perſwaded that Alms and Charity is the beſt Huſbandry, and ſureſt Art of Managry; and would learn of the *Unjuſt Steward*, "To make to them-"ſelves Friends of the unrighteous *Mammon*, that "when they fail, they may receive them into ever-"lasting habitations. *Mat*;6, 19, 20 Lay not up for "your ſelves Treaſures upon earth *&c.* But lay up "for your ſelves Treaſures in Heaven. The men "of the World have their portion in this life; "But as for me when *I* awake, *I* ſhall be ſatisfied "with thy likneſs *Pſal.* 17. 14, 15. Alas! moſt men *firſt* have ſo little deſire for Heaven, that *next* they come to have as little hope of it, and ſo *at laſt* are fain to take up with the World, and for *Jacobs* bleſſing, muſt with *Eſau*, be content with *the fatneſs of the earth. Gen.* 27, 39. Or elſe what mean the unhandſome, unhallowed, and unhappy Practiſes of catching, gripping, and inhancing, which have prevailed ſo far that now mens Covetouſneſs hath ſtrengthned it ſelf with Pride, leſt they ſhould be reputed leſs witty: for how do they boaſt of ſuch exploits? But *ſuch boaſting is not good, and their glory is their ſhame, for they mind earthly things Phil.* 3, 19. And they *have hearts exerciſed with covetous Practiſes, curſed Children* 2 *Pet.* 2. 14. But alas! *I* find one great fault in moſt mens accounts, that they never count upon the Soul; They count their thouſands, and ten thouſands, and hundred thouſands; and the Poor ſoul ſayes, how many count you me? *I* ſtand Debter for ten thouſand Talents upon your ſcore; Yea, *I* am already deſtreſſed, and what will

will you give in exchange for me? Not a groat, sayes the wretch, while *I* have life, though after that he would give ten thousand Worlds; So much there is betwixt market-dayes. 5. *It* teacheth patience in well doing; to them "who by patience "in well doing, seek for Glory, and Honour, and "immortality, is eternal life; *Rom*; 2, 7. There-"fore my beloved Brethren be ye stedfast, unmov-"able, alwayes abounding in the work of the "Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour "is not in vain in the Lord 1 *Cor*; 15. last. And this is the Conclusion of the Apostles vindication of the Resurrection and the life to come. The Saints have a long and sore service in the World, "But God is not unrighteous to forget their la-"bour of love. a cup of cold water shall not be "forgotten: And for whatsoever any have for-saken, they shall have "a hundred fold in this life, "and in the World to come life everlasting: And "we reckon that the sufferings of this present life "are not worthy to be compared with the glory "which shall be revealed in the Saints. Therefore "let us not be weary in well doing, for in due "Season we shall reap, if we faint not *Galat*. 6, 9. 6. *It* supporteth the Christians hope: *For if in this life only we have hope in Christ, of all men we are most miserable* 1 *Cor*. 15, 19. *It* is certainly the interest of every good man to believe the Souls immortality, and as much their Duty to live so as it may be their interest: for it is not Reason and Judgement that prompt men to deny it, but fear and and an evil Concience that tells them it will be ill

for

for them. The Souls immortality is the hope of *Israel*, that maketh them diligent in well doing, patient in Tribulation, and desirous of their change: "for we that are in this Tabernacle do "groan being burdened not for that we would be "uncloathed, but cloathed upon, that mortality "might be swallowed up of life 2 *Cor.* 5. 4.

The *Third* view of these words giveth this manifest Reflection, That *Communion with God is the Souls Sanctuary and Solace.* We have this Prayer of *Nehemiah* thrice Recorded in this *Chap.* and in the close of the 5, *Chap*, besides frequent Addresses of the like nature, such as that solemn Ejaculation *Chap.* 2 4 And that *Chap.* 6, 14. and another in this same *Chap.* ver. 29. Besides his ordinary attendance on publick worship, and Solemn and extraordinary Fasting *Chap.*9. By all which it is evident how Seriously and constantly Godly this renounced worthy was. Like *David* who could say, *what time soever I awake I am with thee:* And truly the Soul is either sleeping or worse when not with God. Affaires and weight of Business quickned their Devotion as much as it extinguisheth ours: And the matter is, they were not cool, indifferent Latitudinarians in Religion, but men of another Spirit, serious Men. And if that be true which Philosophers have said, that that is not the Man which is seen; Alas! what Puppyes, what Mock-men are we, who can, be any thing but Good and Serious? This Observation proven by the experience of Saints in all Generations, *Who sat down under the shaddow of the Almighty with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to their*

taste

taste Cant 2.3. will make it self good by the strongest Reason, when we have seen a little what Communion with God is, and wherin it consists,

And 1. It stands in Reconciliation, the immediate result of Justification by faith: *Amos* 3, 3. "Can two walk together except they be aggreed? *Rom.* 5, 1. "Being justifyed by faith we have peace "with God, and 10. v. We are reconciled by the "death of his Son. This giveth access to God, and bringeth us near who *sometimes were far off*: This of *Enemies* maketh *Friends*; even as *Abraham* believed, and was called *the Friend of God*. 2. In a mystical, spiritual and Supernatural Union, the product of Regeneration; for "he that is joyned to the "Lord is one Spirit, and is made partaker of the "divine Nature. This maketh us Sons; and planteth us in God *John* 1, 12, 13. "To as many as re-"ceived him, to them gave he power to become "the sons of God: which were born, not of blood, "nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of "man, but of God. 1 *John* 4, 13. Hereby we "know that we dwell in him, and he in us, be-"cause he hath given us of his spirit: and v. 16. "God is love, and he that loveth dwelleth in God, "and God in him. *John* 17. 23. I in them, and "thou in me, that they may be made perfect in "one. *John* 15, 5. I am the vine, ye are the branches. 3. In likness of natures, compliance of minds, and conformity of manners. 2 *Cor:* 3, last, he that hath Communion with God *is changed into the same image*: and *Colos.* 3. 10. *is renewed after the image of him that created him.* 1 Cor; 15. 49. *As we have*

born

born the image of the earthy, so must we also of the heavenly. Christ is the image of his Father, and Saints are the image of Christ. And how much are they of one Humour, pleased in and pleasing one another? The Lord is a God to the Saints mind: in Heaven or earth he sees nothing to him: "whom have I "in heaven but thee? Or who is a God like unto "thee? *Nec viget quidquam simile aut secundum*: And the Saint is a *David*, "a man to Gods heart. What is the book of *Canticles* but one continued proof of this matter? What exchange of hearts are there? What concentering of Affections? What returns of Love? What uniting Raptures? What reflections of Beauty? What Echo's of Invitations and Commendations with such likeness of voices that sometimes you shall hardly discern who speaks. Moreover we find this compliance universal in the Saint, swaying all that was in him to the Lords Devotion: "his understanding is re-"newed in knowledge after the *Image* of him that "created him: he understands with God, from God, and for God: *He can do nothing against the truth but for the truth*: He lighteth his Torch at the Sun, and taketh his light from the Candlestick of the Sanctuary, the Law and the Testimony: his faith hath the image of Christ *James* 2. 1. "It is the "faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glo-"ry; And Christs Superscription *Revel.* 3, 14. "These things sayeth the *Amen*, the faithful and "true witness: And, we have the mind of Christ. Conformably his will is swayed, whether for acting, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* or for suffering,

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Not my will but thy will be done: he is an *Orthodox Monothelist.* And for his affections, he loveth and hateth as God doth, and because he doth it. And finally, in his conversation, "he is Holy as God is "Holy, merciful as he is mercifull, and perfect as "his heavenly Father is perfect. Hence the old Philosophers seeing thorow the darkness of nature have said, "That good men are visible mortal "Gods, and the Gods are invisible, immortal men: Which as it is litterally true of their fictitious fancied Gods; so with respect to the true God, it proveth Symbolically that the mystery of the Incarnation is no absurdity; there being such a high affinity betwixt the Divine and Humane nature in its integrity; *for we are also his off-spring* τȣ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν *Acts* 17. 28. 4. In mutual claim to, and interest in the Persons and things of one another; the result of mutual choice, gift, and Covenant contract: "My beloved is mine and "and I am his: I will be their God and they shall "be my People: All that is in God is God, and all that is in God is for his People; *he is a God to Israel*: all that his People are, or have, or can, is for him 1 *Cor.* 6. 19. 20. "ye are not your own; for ye "are bought with a price; Therefore glorify "God in your body, and in your spirit which "are Gods. And none of us liveth to himself, nei-"ther doth any of us dy unto himself, but whe-"ther we live we are the Lords, or whether we dy "we are the Lords. And our Communion with God consisteth much in holding up a Trade, and keeping a bank with God in getting from him and be-

bestowing for him: and though a man cannot profit God, nor reapeth he where he sowed not, yet he must *have his own with the use.* Hath a man communion with God; What hath he done? what hath he given? or what hath he forsaken that he had, or refused that he might have had, for God? *Numb.* 24. 11. *Balak* could say to *Balaam*, *Lo the Lord hath keept thee back from honour*: but we may say to some, The Lord hath not keept thee back from Honour: for like the Apostate *Jews* "they "love the praise of men better than God or the "praise of God; But *Moses* refused to be called the "son of Pharaohs daughter, esteeming the reproach "of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt *Heb.* 11. 24, 26. The Apostles *forsook all and followed Christ*: A good bargain, (a thing much prized by the spirits of our time) "a hundred fold "in this present life, and in the World to come "life everlasting. A man may forsake all for God, but he can lose nothing for God. Take *Galeacius Caracciolus* for a sufficient witness, who proved the matter: *Italy* the Garden of the World, *Naples* of *Italy*, *Vicum* of *Naples*, farewell all for Christ freely. But now if the son of man should come, *shall he find faith in the earth*? Who believeth indeed, that "He who spared not his own son "will with him give us all things freely? Are the "consolations of God small with thee? Thinkest thou so meanly of God, and Christ *the gift of God*, all the fulness of God, the treasures of hope, the earnest of the Spirit, the Riches of faith, the first fruits of the inheritance? Didst thou ever sing *Psal.*

4, 7. "Thou hast put more gladness in my heart "than in the time that their corn and their wine "increased? All these things have I given thee, and yet I will do more for thee, if thou canst but forgoe a little for me; Poor Soul mayst thou not spare it? 5. In fellowship of converse; And therefore in Scripture its called "a walking with "God, before God, in Christ; a dwelling in his "presence, and walking in the light of his counte-"nance. *Psal.* 73, 23. I am continually with thee. "*Psal.* 139. 18. When *I* awake I am still with thee. "2 *Cor.* 16. 16. I will dwell in them and walk in "them *Rev.* 21. 3. And *I* heard a great voice out "of heaven saying, behold the tabernacle of God "is with men, and he will dwell with them, and "they shall be his People, and God himself shall "be with them, and be their God. Men live together for mutual comfort and help of life: "his "comforts delight the soul, and he is the God of "our life. Men converse together for Counsel; *Counsel is mine*, sayeth the *wonderful Counseller*, and he giveth his People Counsel; and therefore the Godly Souls desire is *to enquire in his temple*: Men converse together for business, and O how much hath the Soul to do with God! *Who doth all things for it*: Men pay visits to one another; and what kind visits pass betwixt God and his People? Men feast and sup together; "*I* will sup with him and "he with me *Rev.* 3, 20. *Prov.* 9. 2. "Wisdom "hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, "she hath also furnished her Table. *Psal.* 23, 5. "Thou prepareest a table for me in the presence of

"mine

" mine Enemies. *Isa*, 25. 6. A feast of fat things, " a feast of Wines on the Lees, of fat things full of " Marrow, of Wines on the Lees well refined, *Cant.* 4. last. and 5. 1. " Let my beloved come into his " garden and eat his pleasant Fruits: *I* am come " into my Garden, my Sister, my Spouse, *&c*, Eat " O Friend, Drink, yea Drink abundantly O Beloved. Friends Converse in Presence, and Correspond in Absence and at a distance: The Godly Soul cannot endure Absence or Distance from God; for the Light of his Countenance is better than Life: But if it fall at distance, it keeps up a correspondence; " In my trouble, *I* sought " the Lord, and my cry came before him; even " into his Ears. O ye Daughters of *Jerusalem*, if " you see him whom my Soul loveth, tell him " *I* am Sick of Love. When my heart was over-" whelmed within me, thou knewest my way. " From the ends of the earth will *I* cry unto thee: " O when shall I come and appear before God? Now for a reason of the observation, pray consider; where should a man be, but with his Friend? Where should the Soul be, but where it Subsists, Lives, Loves, Thrives and does well? Where should a man be but at home where he dwelleth? And where should a branch be but in the Vine? Where should Love be but with its Beloved? Where a like but with its like? Where should a man be but where he hath Comfort, liking, and being liked? Where should a man be but with his Interest? A Receiver but with a Giver? Or a Servant Entrusted but about his Masters Business? Where should a

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Courteour be but with his Prince? a man but With his Counseller? a person invited but at the feast? and one visited but waiting upon his freind?

But how sad is it that men should so far sleight as to forfeit, and so justly forfeit as to sleight Communion with God? What lamentations may hereon be written? or what shall be taken to witness for this? *Jer*: 2, 10, 11, 12, 13. "Hath "any of the nations done such a thing as this "to forsake their Gods, which yet are no Gods? "but my People hath forsaken me for a thing that "cannot profit. And will a man forsake the snow "of Lebanon for the water of the brook? But if yet there be hope, let men be exhorted to consider of their wayes, by all the serious names of interest, profession, the love of their espousals, the memory of their serious hours, the testimony of their experiences, their appaling fears, their silent, silencing and silenced convictions; their unsatisfied desires, and speaking disappointments giving them darkness for light, a scorpion for an egg, a Ston for bread, a lie for truth, a cloud for *Juno*: And finally by the misery of their despised Soules: For what is the Soul destitute of God? An exile, wandering, wearyed, weighted, wounded, naked, reproached, starved, appaled, sleighted, hopless, helpless, a broken soul, a lost soul? *Psal*: 142, 4. 5. "Refuge failed me, no man cared for my soul; *I* "cryed unto thee O Lord, *I* said, thou art my re-"fuge and my portion in the Land of the living. "This is the rest wherewith they may cause the

" weary to rest: in returning and rest shall men " be saved, in quietness and confidence they shall " be established. Return unto thy rest O my soul.

The 4*th* view of this exquisite piece gives us *The Pattern of a Good Ruler.* For being the Epilogue and close of the book, it hath a natural and due relation to what goeth before; and bearing the answer of a good conscience, casteth a streight reflection on the life and acts of the man; and being a suit for reward, hath a necessary respect to the work, which also is expressed *Chap*: 5, 19. " Think upon " me O my God for good, according to all that " *I* have done for this People: and in this same " *Chap*: 14. ver, remember me O my God concern- " ing this, and wipe not out my good deeds that *I* " have done for the house of my God: and ver. 22. " remember me O my God concerning this also, " and spare me according to the greatness of thy " mercy. Many Rulers have done worthily, some excelling in one thing, some in another; yet search Histories sacred and common, you shall not readily find in one man so many excellent parts, nor so compleat a living, practical pattern of a good Ruler. The Ruler would do himself a favour, and God, & his People a great good service, to preserve the Authentick of this book in his heart, and copy it exactly in his life and Government. He is a great Kings high Commissionar: and all things in such a person being so great, that his sins cannot be small, his care had need be so much the greater, and he would look to his copy the oftner. Behold then and consider, and you see him, like

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the Sun in the Zodiack, perfecting his course through all the signes of a ruleing Luminary.

1. He is zealously and eminently Godly; a burning and shining light; breathing at once a living compend of faith and obedience, Law and Gospel: For, faith laying hold on Gods Covenant, and obedience to the first and great Commandment of love, which is the fulfilling of the Law, are both angled and pointed in this one word *My God*: a man much in meditation, given to Prayer, Duties of so strict affinity, that in Scripture the one passeth for the other: a man, the multitude and weight of whose employments awakeneth and quickeneth his devotion: such a riddle is Religion that out of the Eater it can bring meat, and sweet out of the strong; but he that would unfold it must plow with *Samsons* heifer and be truely Godly. Lo every act of the Governour shut up with Prayer. In the discharge of his employment and exercise of his Government, he looks to God for direction; for *he did all things as was found written in the* Law; for help in his address to the King, *he Prayed to the God of Heaven*; for his reward, *remember me O my God for good*. And therefore he was neither partial nor indifferent in the Law, but zealously he pursued good, and persecuted evil, and that in all whatsoever: neither is his Religion recluse, in the large as cold as calm, and full as dark as cold shaddows of fruitless, lazie, lifeless, cowardly contemplation, but goeth abroad into free, generous, zealous, and Heroick acting, retaining the height of spirituality in the midst of secularity, resembling therein the Archetype Ruler,

who in most perfect rest Ruleth all things, and moveth all, himself unmoved. It is below the Godly Ruler to be swayed and abused either by his own Lust and interest, or example of others: *Chap*: 5. 14, 15. " *I* and my brethren have not eaten the " bread of the Governour: but the former Go- " vernours that had been before me were charge- " able to the People, and had taken of them bread " and wine, beside fourty shekels of silver, yea e- " ven their servants bare Rule over the People: " but so did not I, because of the fear of God. The fear of God is the Star that guides the good Ruler 2 *Sam*.23, 3. " He that ruleth over men must " be just, rusing in the fear of God. *If* Religious pretences be made helps to policy, how much better must be it self in reality? And let politick pretenders beware of their fate and folly who taught others to be Captains to their own ruine, that they teach not others to be Politicians to the expence of the teacher, when he is served with his own measure. Yet as to shun the basenes of Hypocrisy a man needs not run to the wickedness of avowed profanity, so can he not pass from the one to the other but over the fair neck of Christianity, with greater insolency of impiety then the outrageously barbarous T*ullia* drove her chariot over the belly of her Murdered Father. *Levi*. L*ib*. 1.

2. The good Ruler is a " Reformer, a repairer " of breaches, a restorer of paths to dwell in: and it is but a faint encouragment and a desperat complement to a good Ruler *Isay* 3, 6. " Be thou our " Ruler, and let this ruine be under thy hand:

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Nor can he love to have it recorded, that in his dayes such evils prevailed unreformed: it was "when there was no King in *Israel* that every man "did what was right in his own eyes. If the health "of the People be not recovered, it sayeth there is "no Physician there *Jer*: 8, 22. But a good Ruler "scattereth the wicked and bringeth the wheel "over them; and he may say with *David Psal*: 75, 3. "The earth and all the inhabitants thereof "are dissolved, *I* bear up the pillars of it: he is βασιλεὺς, βασις τȣ λαȣ name and thing, a *Joseph the Son of Israel*. Such a one was *Moses* the Law-giver, such was *Josua* his successor, such were the *Judges* of *Israel*, such was *Samuel*, such were all the good Kings of *Judah*, such was *Ezra* the Scribe, and such was *Nehemiah* the *Tirshatha*, an eminent Reformer of Religion and state, of Church and Kingdom. For Religion: in general, Gods Holy Commandments were broken by all ranks of persons; prophanity and iniquity prevailed and abounded, that is solemnly confessed and amended *Chapters* 1. &. 9. *In* particular, oppression reigned, that is quashed *Chap*: 5. and the People relieved: false Prophets were hired by the enemy, and bribed to compliance to weaken the Rulers hands and hinder the work of Reformation, they are discovered and marked *Chap*: 6. The ordinary worship of God, and his Solemn Feasts were disused; these are restored *ch*: 8. For advancing and establishing the whole Reformation a Solemn Fast is kept *ch*: 9. and a Covenant subscribed *ch*. 10. The Holy Seed had mingled themselves and matched with strangers,

People of heathen abominations; they separate themselves, and that is amended *ibid.* The offerings of the Lord were neglected, these are renewed *ibid:* The Sabbaths were horribly prophaned, That is strictly and with certification discharged, and they not suffered to lodge about the walls *Chap:* 10, 31. and 13, 15. and foreward. The service of God was neglected by non-residence of the Priests through calamity and want, that also is helped *Chap.* 10, 11, 12, 13. ver. 10. The orders and services of the Preists and Levits were confused; these are cleared, and they set to their charges as appointed by *David Chap;* 7. 63, 12. 45. and 13, 30 Strangers uncircumcised had entred and defiled the Congregation of the Lord, these are removed *chap:* 13, 3, Profane Persons of the Princes of the heathen had lodgings in the Lords house, they are expelled and the Chambers cleansed *Chap.* 13. 8. 9. Some of the chief of the Preists had defiled the Covenant of the Preisthood by strange wives, they are branded, and that also is amended. For the State: "the city the place of their Fathers sepulchres lay "waste, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire: First these are repaired. The people and their work are strongly opposed and sore reproached, they are vindicated and their hands strengthened *Chap.* 2, 4. When the City is built it is not manned, therefore inhabitants and defendants are appointed *Chap.* 11. The People suffer sore by morgage, the great sin of the oppressors belonging to the former head, and calamity of the oppressed pertaining to this part; that is redressed *Chap:* 5. Open and

and secret enemies correspond and plot against the work and the Ruler, these are discovered and disappointed *Chap.* 6. They are in great reproach and distress; God is sought and means are used *Chap.* 4 and 6. They are poor; husbandry and traffick is practised, only the Sabbaths work and markets are discharged; Oppression is born down, and the People relieved of publick burdens; *Nehemiah* the Governour and his brethren neither exacted the bread of the Governour, nor bought Land, nor refused to work as others. O for such Rulers to a nation scattered and peeled, a nation metted out and troden down, whose land is spoiled! *Isay* 18, 2. Our Rulers, if they had a mind, have a fair occasion for *Jobs* Gloriation *Chap.* 29. 13. "The blessing of him that was ready to perish came "upon me &c. In this time are great decayes, desolations, abuses, and unsufferable corruptions; let it not be thought an Error proceeding from the Ruler. And here People would be warned to encourage and comply with Reforming Rulers, not, as they were in *Hezekiahs* and *Josiahs* times, inveterate, incureable and obstinate in their corruptions, lest they hear that, *Hos.* 10, 3, 4. "A "King can do them no good, because they feared "not the Lord, and spake words swearing falsly "in making a Covenant. But this pertaineth to the Ruler, "That whatsoever is commandedby "the God of Heaven, be diligently done for the "house of the God of Heaven, lest there be wrath "against the realm of the King and his Sons *Ezra.* 7. 23. And "that Judgment run like a river, and righ-

" teousness like a mighty stream: That he take his pattern from the type, and Antitype, who also is the Archetype Ruler *Psal.* 72. *So shall there be abundance of peace*; and *also in Judah things shall go well.*

3. The good Ruler hath a natural, Fatherly and tender care of the People. Thus its said *Isay* 49. 23 *Kings shall be nursing Fathers.* And in *Israel* they were wont to mourn for good Rulers with this expression, *ah my brother Jer:* 22, 18. Yea *he is the breath of our nostrils, Lament.* 4, 20. by whom in the publick body " we lead a quiet life and " peaceable in all Godliness and honesty 1 *Tim.* 2. 2. He is *pater patriæ & parens Reip.* Nor can I see what should have moved those dissembling Emperours, who in semblance refused the title of Lord, to make so nice of the endearing name of *Father of the Countrey*, but simply the conscience that they did as little deserve the name as they designed the thing. But surely, as a Rich man will never want an heir, a good Ruler can never want Children; nor needs he fear *Conibs* fate, *Write ye this man Childless*: for if he have the heart of a *Father*, he shall have *the name that's better than sons and daughters.* We find not that *Nehemiah* was marryed, yet his name flourisheth in the records of his eminent services, more than if his line had continued uninterrupted to this day, " The righteous shall be had " in everlasting remembrance. *Four* things are proper to the care of a Father: Affection, Instruction, Correction, and Provision: all which are evident in *Nehemiah* the Governour. Great is his *Affection Chap.* 1, 3, 4. And how Sadly taketh he on for the

reproach and affliction of his brethren? "he sat "down and weept and mourned certain dayes, and "fasted and Prayed before the God of Heaven. He cannot digest their grief *Chap*: 8. 9, 10. When the People Weept, he said, "Go your way, eat the "fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions to "them for whom nothing is prepared, for this "day is holy, neither be ye sad for the joy of the "Lord is your strength. For *Instruction*, he causeth the Priests read to them the book of the Law of *Moses*; "So they read in the book, in the Law "of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caus-"ed them to understand the reading ibid. 8, ver. Nor is he wanting in *correction chap*. 5, 7. "I re-"buked the Nobles and the Rulers; and *chap*. 13, "25. I contended with them, and cursed them, "and smot certain of them, and pluckt off their hair: and in the 11, v. *ibid*. "I contended with the Ru-lers; and in the 17. v, again, "I contended with "the Nobles of Judah; and 21, v, then I testified "against them, and saied unto them, why lodge "ye about the wall? If ye do so again I will lay "hands on you. And in the matter of *Provision*, he was of the mind of the Apostle, "That Chil-"dren ought not to lay up for their Parents, but "the Parents for the Children; he will not be "chargeable to the People, nor take the bread of "the Governour, nor buy Land; but keeps a large Table "for a hundred and fifty of the Jews "and Rulers, beside strangers. And that no man may think this was a frolick, or an ambitious, singular, popular humour, v, 15. he asserteth expresly

presly, "that this he did, because of the fear of "God; and resolveth it into this reason; that he "would not be chargeable to the People: And thus I take the account of the matter, That to be chargeable to a poor exhausted People consisteth not with the fear of God, nor with the fatherly heart of a good Ruler. In fine, the Ruler should remember, that Subjection first founded in a Son is ultimatly refounded in the Commandment, *Honour thy Father.*

4. The good Ruler is a person well informed and throughly acquainted with the condition of his People. Such was *Nehemiah.* And first, Some things fall under his own eye and observation: such as the prophanation of the Sabbath, and the marriages with strangers, in this same *Chap. I saw* (sayes he) &c. A Ruler can be nought the less a Judge that he is a Witness. *Matth.* 26. 65. What further need have we of Witnesses? behold now *ye have heard*, was proof sufficient, if the enditement had been relevant. It were good in the first place, that Rulers would suppress the enormities whereof themselves are Witnesses. Histories tell us of many famous Persons, who would go through their dominions *incognito* or in diguise, to get information. Our *James* the *fifth* is known to have been much of this humour; and a pitty it is, that his methods and prattiques of information were not committed to more clear and faithful records than dark and slippery tradition. *Chap*; 2, 12. *Nehemiah* goeth out by night to view the wall. The ancient Hieroglyphicks, which painted Rulers blind,

blind, may here come under correction; for he that hath not eyes and ears of his own can neither see nor hear with another mans, as is commonly said to be the case of Rulers. Other things the *Tirshatha* understands by information of others: And here the good Ruler will seek information *Chap* 1. 2. ver. And this proceeds from his foresaid affection; or otherways he rejects not information, and that either by complaint, as in the case of the morgage 5 *chap.* Or simple historical relation, as the condition of *Jerusalem* and the people *Chap.* 1, 2, 3. and the fault of *Eliashib* in giving *Tobiah* a chamber in the house of the Lord *chap*, 13. 7. And the withholding of the Priests portion ver. 10. It is the part of all good Subjects, in their several Stations, to give, and the part of the good Ruler to seek and take information of evils and disorders in the Peoples condition or manners. Princes should have long ears. *Pharoahs* Princes said, *knowest thou not that Egypt is destroyed*? If he knew not, they could tell him it. But sometimes *know not* is one with *care not*, and then comes the question of the disciples, "master carest thou not that we perish? and *Prov.* 24. 12. would be remembred: "if thou "sayest, behold, we knew it not: doth not he "that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that "keepeth thy Soul, doth not he know it? and "shall not he render to every man according to his "works? Foreign intelligence is necessary of the counsels and motions of enemies: and *Nehemiah* is not wanting in that either; yet take it apart from homeward information and acquaintance with

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our own condition, it is but *foris ſapere*, and none of the greateſt wiſdom: for what is the difference betwixt a man out of his wits, and him whoſe wits are without him? What can a Judge ſay to a cauſe, or a Phyſician to a diſeaſe without information? And what can a Ruler do for a People, unleſs he be throughly acquainted with their condition?

5. The good Ruler is a homely, condeſcending, converſible, and acceſſible perſon. This neceſſarly maketh way for the former in practiſe, and followeth from it in reaſon. *Chap.* 1. 2. *Hanani* and and the men of *Judah* got acceſs to and audience of *Nehemiah. chap.* 4, 22. he talketh with the People; yea he hears the complaints of the People and their wives that were oppreſſed *chap* 5 1. to 6. And *chap.* 7 5. God puts it in his heart to gather the Nobles and the Rulers, and the People. *chap.* 4, 14. and 8, 9. he encourageth and comforteth the People, and *ſayeth to them* &c *chap.* 13, 7, When he came to *Jeruſalem* he underſtood what there was done: and how but by converſe? els might he as well have underſtood elswhere. Yea v. 15, he condeſcends to be a perſonal reprover of thoſe of the people whom he ſaw profaneing the Sabbath; and likwiſe of the merchants v 21. and of theſe v. 25. who had tranſgreſſed by ſtrange marriages. Nor is all this popularity, but real duty, which obligeth Rulers by many commands in Scripture, to hearken the compaint and hearthe cauſe of the poor and needy. Hence *Iſayes* complaint 59, 14: "that Judgement is turned away backward, and juſtice ſtandeth afar off;

"that

"that truth is fallen in the street, and equity can-
"not enter; it can have no access to, nor hearing
of the Ruler. An unaccessible Ruler is a Luminary
eclipsed: The intercepting of the soveraign's
beams from shedding their benigne influence upon
the Subjects and precluding the Subject from
access to receive them, are by so far more fatal than
the most dismal eclipses; these but conjecturally and
contingently portend, these necessarly and effectually
produce and unavoidably infer the fall of a Ruler;
and really undo the Prince whatever they pretend
for the person, and leave him, like a defeated
Trojan with his royal blood to shift for a Kingdom,
beside the wrong done to the People. If any
should invert the decree *Dan.* 6, 7. and establish it
with this alteration, that any man may freely ask petitions
of any God or man, save of the King, it would
be large as unpolitick as the other is ungodly. In
such case *Esthers* resolution must carry it: "Behold
"*I* goe in to the King, which is not according to
"Law, and if *I* perish *I* perish. A reclose Prince
is so absurd and inconsistent, that *Charles the fifth*
disponed his Crowns before he took himself to the
Cloister: Nor should ought but despair make a
Monk of a Ruler. *I* understand not the mystery of
Gyges, how a man can see unseen; nor what but
a miserable vanity can move some great Princes of
the East to shut themselves up in Canopyes; but all
the World knows what all the World thinks of
Achilles with his distaff, and *Sardanapalus* in his
Gynæceum and *Tiberius* in his retreat at *Capreæ*.
"But he that ruleth over men must be Just, rul-
"ing

"ing in the fear of God; and is as the light of the "morning when the Sun riseth, even a morning "without clouds, as the tender grass springing "out of the earth by clear shineing after rain. 2*Sam.* 23, 4. His countenance and influence must reach, to visit and refresh the lowest of his People. That homely and accessible Prince *James the fifth*, called *The Carl's King* of *Scotland*, really was; and was reputed the bravest Prince in his time.

6. If he be a *Nehemiah*, a Commissioner deputed by a soveraign Ruler, he must be, as diligent to ger, so faithful to give true and full information of the Peoples condition to his Master, and effectually to interpose for his help, and to enlarge the indulgence of his Royal Concessions to the outmost. Thus *Nehemiah* told the King all that was told him of *Jerusalem* and his People *chap.* 2, 3. and that in sadness: and sought a commission for help and reparation v, 5. and foreward; which he shewed to the Governours beyond the river v, 9. And executed to the full extent throughout the whole Book. In the 4 and 6 v. of the 2 *chap.* His request and the Kings grant was only that he might build *Jerusalem:* and we see in the progress of the work, and sequele of the History, how amply he prosecutes that Commission to the largest extent of its virtual comprehension: for he not only builds, but beautifyes, not only beautifyes, but fortifyes; not only repaires but reformes *Jerusalem*, and yet exceedeth not his commission: for when all this is done *Jerusalem* is but *Jerusalem, beautiful for situation: a city that is compact together; whether the*

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tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord: for there are set trons of Judgement, the trons of the house of David *Psal* 48, 2. and 122, 3, 4, 5. And *David* by a figure understood no less in his serious petition *Psal*; 51, 18. *'Do good in thy good Pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem*; where one part helpeth to clear another; to build her walls is figurativly, to do her good properly; and to do her good in propriety, is in the figure to build her walls; and *Psal.* 122, 7 He calleth it more expresly *peace and prosperity.* The Ruler that is thus minded may resolve with *Nehemiah*, to meet with scorn, calumny, opposition, and, which is ordinary, malicious challenges of sedition, and accusations of rebellion; but affection to the work, adherence to his Commission, the gallantry of his Person, Prayer to and confidence in the God of Heaven bear him out against and over all these: *chap.* 2. 20. " I said unto them, The God of " heaven he will prosper us, therefore we his ser- " vants will rise and build; *chap.* 6, 9. Now there- " fore O God strengthen my hands; and 11, v. I " said, should such a man as I flee? and who is " there that being as I am would go into the tem- " ple to save his life? *I* will not go in. How chiefly necessary is this good part in a deputed Ruler, where the nation to their great loss wants the desireable influence of their Gracious Princes presence?

7. The good Ruler is Governed by Justice and the Law of God, in the whole exercise of his Go-

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vernment 2 *Sam.* 23, 3. *He must be just.* Before there were Kings in *Israel*, it was appointed *Deut.* 17, 18, 19. *That the King should have a copy of the law which he should read, and keep, and do, even all the words and statutes.* This was *Davids* study *Psal* 119. throughout. This was the care of the good reforming Kings of *Judah*, chiefly *Hezekiah* and *Josiah*; this was the practise of *Ezra* the scribe, and *Nehemiah* the *Tirshatha.* According to the law he hates and refraines from oppression himself, and restraines it in others: According to the law he orders the Genealogies of the Priests, and appoints their offices and portions: According to the Law he restores the ordinary and extraordinary publick worship, and Solemn Feasts. According to the Law he reformes the abuse of marriage with strangers. According to the Law, and practise of good Rulers in former times, he subscrives a Covenant for Reformation. According to the Law he sanctifies the Temple, and cleanses it from the abomination of heathen usurpation, and profanatition of strangers. According to the Law, he dischargeth the profanation, and enjoyneth strictly the sanctification of the Sabbath. This is that which maketh the difference betwixt a good Ruler and a Tyrant. But every measure is not the standard; and humane Laws have too much of the man to be perfect, and not so much of the *Pope* as to be ininfallible. Other Laws are but *Ruled Rules*; but the Law of God is the *Ruling pattern Psal.* 19, 7. *The Law of the Lord is perfect, and his testimony is sure.* In a time of Restitution, even Laws may

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ffer a Reformation: That which hath been may e; and a Rescissory Act is not impossible. But *Artaxerxes* his decree must stand immovable *Ezra* ,23. "Whatsoever is commanded by the God of Heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God Heaven: With this *intimation*, lest there be wrath. Moses was faithful in all the house of God, as a servant, but Jesus Christ as a son; and the Isles shall wait for his Laws *Isay* 42. 4. "A voice came from Heaven saying, 'This is my beloved Son, hear ye him. Be wise 'ye Kings, be instructed ye judges of the earth: 'kiss the Son. *Ps.* 2, 12. The Ruler ought to be a iving Law, and to remember the noble saying of *Caesar* to the *Roman Senate*, *In maxima fortuna minima licentia est*; which is true, as he there reckoneth, in as far as the faults of Rulers being more notour, are otherwayes also aggravated above the transgressions of others. But herewith consider The Law being the mind of the Ruler; a lawless Ruler, as a self-contradicter, maketh himself a transgressor: If the Law be evil, why did he make it? if it be good, then why should he break it?

8. The good Ruler is a wise person. It is wisdom that saith *Prov.* 8. 15, 16. *By me Kings reign and Princes decree Justice: by me Princes Rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the earth.* You have heard of the wisdom of *Solomon*: and *David* his Father *was as an Angel of God discerning Good and Evil*: And who wiser than *Daniel*? Happy Commonwealth where either wise men reign, or Kings Study wisdom. *Six* Things in morality and Divi-

nity, in Reason and Scripture contribut to wisdom: *Knowleage*, *Understanding*, *Invention*, *Councel*, *Judgment*, and *Prudence*: which, howbeit because of their affinity and mutual concurrence, they be often used promiscuously; yet, having naturally their distinct proprieties, I shall indeavour, as *I* can, to marshall them in their due order, especially as required in the Ruler. 1. *Knowleage* taketh up things simply and historically as they are or appear, and hath its treasure chiefly in the Memory: it is purchased and preserved either by observation and experience, for "a wise mans eyes are in his head: or by reading; "*Ahasuerus* caused read the Chroni-"cles; and *Daniel* understood by Books. The Book and play are the two things that take up Children: if the Latter be not below the Ruler, surely he is not above the former: he who will not be as a Child at Book, may happily prove such indeed in counsell; and he who will not be serious in *Ludo*, may readily *Ludere in re seria*. We know what account *Alexander* had, and what use he made of the works of *Homer*, *I* suppose most of the History then extant. And in all ages and places where Letters were received, what a price have Princes put upon learned men and Libraryes? How great Historians were the bravest Emperours? Or els knowledge is got by tradition and information of others; before books were used, or where they were not known, *We have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us* was the History practised. *I* suppose History was not much known to our Nation in the dayes of *Galdus*, yet we find him

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discourse to his People of the Noble acts of their ancestors, as exactly as if he had been reading a Lecture of History. 2. *Understanding*, lodged higher in the upper room of the speculative Judgement, and reaching deeper, discovereth things in their original, and taketh them up in their causes, and how they are. Simple knowledge without understanding is like those of whom we read in *Matth.* 13, 13. "That seeing they see not, and "hearing they hear not, neither do they understand: One saith well, *It* is a good Memory that remembers a thing and the reason thereof: *I* add, it is a good knowledge that knoweth a thing and the causes thereof; *felix qui potuit &c*, Are there in a land abuses and corruptions? are their decays and desolations? here is the wisdom of the Ruler, seriously to consider "for what the land perisheth, "and is burnt up as a wilderness *Jer.* 9, 12. And if he be as willing as concerned to know, the next verse will resolve him; "because they have forsaken "my Law, which *I* set before them, and have not "obeyed my voice, neither walked therein, but "have walked after the imagination of their own "heart &c. The *Philistins* when they were afflicted, upon inquiry found, that it was not a chance, but the hand of God that afflicted them, for his Ark which they held captive 1 *Sam.* 6. And *Pharaoh* to his cost was taught understanding, because he would not let the People goe to serve the Lord. *Genes:* 20. 3 and 18. *Abimilech* King of *Gerar* was taught to understand the cause of the barrenness of his house, for that he had taken a mans wife. The same is shew-

ed by *Hosea chap*, 4. 10. *They shall commit Whordom and shall not increase.* In a word, whatsoever plague, whatsoever sore is upon a People, it springs from Sin, the formal cause of corruptions, and meritorious of afflictiones and desolations. *The Crown is fallen from our head; wo unto us for we have sinned.* 3. *Invention*, of great affinity with understanding; this resolving effects into their causes, and that producing effects from their causes, like a Latine Version of a Hebrew line or sentence, rendering foreward what was read backward. This is seeded by observation, and conceived by Imagination: It's issues, if weaker and tender are called fancys; if masculine and stronger, Engines and witty inventions. The Ruler must be an inventer of fit means to reform the abuses, remove the misery, further and settle the good and wellfare of his People: Such as *Nehemiah chap.* 7. 5. acknowledgeth that *God put into his heart* for peopling and manning of *Jerusalem*: and such as his appointing the Priests and Levits in their offices for the service of God, and instruction of the People: his causing shut the gates ordinarly with the Sun-set, for defence of the City, and sooner before the Sabbath, for its sanctification: and that of not eating the bread of the Governour, for the ease of the People: his causing restore their Lands morgaged by oppression: his making a Covenant, and entring the People into a curse with their own consent, for advancing reformation. O that that *Wisdom*, *by which King Reign*, would teach them the knowledge of such *witty inventions*! 4. *Counsel* is an assembly of the witts for advice, and for

for the exercise and tryal of inventions, that it may be known what is good, or what is better, and *what Israel ought to do. chap: 5, 7. I consulted with my self* (saith *Nehemiah*) *and I rebuked the nobles and the Rulers: and I set a great Assembly against them*; I appointed a high Commission for bearing down of oppression : and that was amongst the rest of his Noble Inventions. 5. *Judgment* is the Chair-man and Umpire of Counsel, determining, approving, and preferring sentences, as bad or good, good or better: and resting in one thing, as a close of the matter; *Absalom* sayeth, *give counsel among you*; they say, *the counsel of Ahithophel is good, but the counsel of Hushai the Archite is better*; For the *great Counseller* had appointed the one to defeat the other: Counsel is good but determination is necessar: els he who hath much, is no better than he who hath nothing to say in a matter: and wavering in counsel proves but Weakness of Judgment. Consultation should end in Resolution, and Resolution in Execution (as we see in *Nehemiah*) for that whereof we are speaking is the practical judgment. 6. *Prudence* that wise and Religious Matron, who with the gravity of her countenance putteth to shame and silence the folly of *Atheism*, and insolency of impiety, in her whole carriage keepeth such a measure and decency as courteth into her devotion all that is worshipped: *Nullum numun abest si sit Prudentia*; and guideth her affaires with such high discretion, that by Scripture and Reason, Divines and Philosophers she is deservedly preferred to the Government of Manners, and intrusted with

the ballance and ſtandard of vertues, which in all things keep that meaſure *quam vir prudens determinaverit.* She relieveth man of the great miſery that lyeth upon him, teaching him *to know both time and purpoſe: for to every thing there is a ſeaſon, and a time to every purpoſe under Heaven.* She ſo fitteth reſolutions to the exigent of occaſions, as maketh them both ſafe and ſeaſonable, decent and effectual. She foreſeeth the evil and avoideth it, and taketh the good in its ſeaſon: ſhe ſaveth a man the expence of Apologies, and ſhame of *non putaram.* And thus *Nehemiah* was wiſe to know the Counſels of his enemies, and conceal his own purpoſes till the opportunity. And this is the Rulers prudence, neither to let the evil approach him, nor the good eſcape him; nor ought he to ſay to the People, *come again another time, when it is in the power of his hand to do them good,* leſt hind-bald occaſion ſlip him, and his power periſh with the opportunity. 1 *Chron.* 12. 32. The Children of *Iſachar were men that had underſtanding of the times, to know what Iſrael ought to do. Tempus noſce* was the ſaying of *Pittacus* of *Mitylena*, reckoned the firſt of the *Greek ſages. To day if ye will hear his voice,* is the ſaying of the only wiſe God: and, *O that thou hadſt known, even thou in this thy day!* Was the wiſh and Lamentation of the conſubſtantial Wiſdom of God. *Be wiſe now therefore O ye Kings: be inſtructed ye Judges of the earth* Pſal. 2, 10.

9. The good Ruler is a perſon of courage and valour, a gallant Perſon. In this *Nehemiah* was Eminent. This is the main and only thing ſo much inculcat

culcat by *Moses* upon *Joshuah* his successor, *Jos.* 1. 7. *Only be thou strong and very courageous.* This joyned with the former maketh *Consilio & animis* a noble device for a Ruler: and he who is born with those induements hath a horoscope more prognosticative of advancement, than he who is born under the most Regnant Planets. The Gallantry of the Ruler is evidenced in a resolute and inflexible observance of all Gods Holy Commandments, maugre all opposition of his own lust and corruption: *He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a City*; Or of the example and insinuations of others, or the scorn, and threats, and plots of enemies, or the eminent degree of transgressors. If morality and righteousness be the true measure of Gallantry, surely the World hath many bastard ridiculous Gallants, who dare do any thing but what is right and Godly. But the courage of *Nehemiah* appeareth particularly. 1. In his address to the King in behalf of his City that was desolate, and his People that were in reproach and affliction. It is no less unpardonable a reflection upon the Justice and Royal goodness of a King, to be diffident in requesting of him what is just, than to dare to ask unjustly. *Nehemiah* when he is bid ask, all his asking is for *Jerusalem chap.* 2. 6, 7. 2. In that he can sustain the greif, displeasure, and scorn of malicious heathen enemies for the work of Reformation *Ibid.* 10, v. 3. In that he dare atcheive so desperat like a work as was the repairing of *Jerusalems* so vast desolations. v. 17. 4. In his un-

conquered faith and confidence of Gods assistance, 20. v. *he was strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* 5. In the atcheivment of a double employment, building and fighting, *Chap.* 4, 17. A coward may build a City in peace, and a slugard may defend himself in a strong City; but a Worthy only can build with one hand and fight with the other. 6. In his rebuking the Nobles and the Rulers for their oppression, *chap* 5. 7. An act of native gallantry, and an example for all that deserve to be in eminency; the matter of Holy *Jobs* Gloriation *chap.* 31. 34. *Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence?* 7. In his rare generosity refusing, *because of the fear of God, to eat the bread of the Governour,* or to bow to the example of those that had been before him, *who had been chargeable to the People.* The good Ruler dare be singular in vertue, and accounts it his honour, not to take evil, but to give good example. What an unexcusable incongruity is it for a man who should be examplary to others in good, to submit to evil example? And it is the voice of *Roman* gallantry, *discant alii potius nostro exemplo recte facere, quam nos illorum peccare.* 8. In his inexorable resistance, even to the *fifth* time, of his enemies treacherous pretences for accommodation, with a design to do him mischief: 6. *chap.* wherein is no less manifest his singular wisdom.

10. The good Ruler is a vigilant, active, and diligent person. We find *Nehemiah* in continual motion, acting himself, and exciting others in

their

their respective orders, like a great Superior Orb winding the Inferior in their subordinate courses. For it is the inseparable, undenyable right of Supremacy, to take inspection of all, and put every one to his proper duty. And as the Superior Orb moves not symmetrically in the place of the Inferior, but moves in its place concentrically: Just so is the case of the Ruler. The slothful and soft Ruler is one upon the matter; and if there be any odds, a waking living Dog is better than a sleeping dead Lyon. It was *Nehemiah*'s Honour, that neither the People, nor his own servants, nor the Princes and Rulers could be evil without a witness, as they were not good without an example. Whence.

11. The good Ruler is a person of an examplary conversation: *alios quod monet ipse facit*: he practiseth the same, that he commandeth: by a leading example he goeth out and in before the People: *he walketh with a perfect heart within his house.* The World is Ruled by example. A good life is as necessar as good Laws in a Ruler; and an evil example more hurtfull than evil Laws: for that a pernicious Law may quickly be repealed; but bad example is not easily reformed. Laws governed by righteousness, and a life ordered by Law maketh the perfect Ruler. Thus we see *Nehemiah* examplary in Religion, in refraining and restraining oppression, in wisdom, courage, vigilancy, and all the forementioned vertues: and this he hath left as a pattern to Rulers.

12. The good Ruler is a constant person, persevering

vering and abounding in well doing: he is *stedfast, unmoveable, abounding alwayes in the work of the Lord, knowing that his labour is not in vain in the Lord.* Thus we see *Nehemiah* beginning with good designs and intentions, going on with gallant interprises and good actions, and ending conformably with a good conscience, and Glorious expectation in the last act of his appearance: *Remember me O my God for good.* He remembreth that *better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof; and that he who indureth to the end shall be saved; and that he is crowned who striveth lawfully,* and therefore *so runneth that he may obtain.* He knoweth *Ezek.* 18. 24. *When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, he shall not live: all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned, in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin, that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.* He knows the *quinquennium Neronis*, and the misgiving pretences and appearances of *Tiberius* and others: and he is better acquaint with Scripture than to be ignorant of the Apostacy, ingratitude, and fate of *Joash* 2 *Chron.* 24. Whereby is manifest that this observation is large as useful as true concerning the Ruler. *But the path of the just is as the shining light which groweth brighter and brighter unto the noon-tide of the day.* And such a one is the good Ruler.

Now from this illustrat Character shine forth in so many bright beams 1. The Original, 2, Dignity, 3, Duty, 4. Necessity, 5. Usefulness, and 6. Rarity

rity of the good Ruler. All which (so rich a piece is Scripture) may be easily deduced from one sentence of *Psal* 82 6. *I have said, ye are Gods, and all of you are Children of the most high.* And because *I* know that both is evil manners, *to come rashly into, and go hastily from the presence of a Ruler*: *I* shall for a salutation shut up my view with this seasonable exhortation: That in this Atheistical age, the Ruler would do his Author the Honour, himself the pleasure, and a discontented, unbelieving World the favour, to shew forth so much of God in his person and administrations, that those who will not believe may see, and those who will not see may feel, *That there is a God, that God judgeth in the earth*, and that by his vicegerent; that he be unquestionably good himself, *an incourager of those that do well*, and *a terror of evil doers*: that by the shaddow of Divinity in the Ruler, the World (if possible) may be convinced of the body and substance; and by the sight of the beautiful portrait may be enamoured of the original. And you O Christian People consider, Christ is not divided, nor contrary to himself. He is by nature and eternal Generation Lord of the World, and God of policy and order, as well as of the Church by pact and dispensation; and it is more than probable that Rulers hold not Christ as Mediator. Christianity received into the policy is not so untoward or unpleasant a Guest as to disturb its own quarter: and Religion but getteth the medlers blow when it sendeth a sword or occasioneth division: for of it's own nature it is a harmless peace-pursuer;

ſuer; and they were ſworn enemies and ſlanderers of our Saviour who ſaid *he was an enemie to Cæſar*; for he taught his followers *to give unto Cæſar the things that are Cæſars, and unto God the things that are Gods.* Learn then of him to pay what we owe unto the Ruler. How much are we indebted to ſo rare and excellent a creature as is the good Ruler? We owe the Ruler 1. Honour, in heart and behaviour. 2, Subjection, in lawful obedience or in humble ſubmiſſion. 3. Information and aſſiſtance in our reſpective ſtations. 4. Tribute, and the bread of the Governour, 5. And with all our owing we owe Prayer 1. *Tim.* 2. 2. 1. *Sam.* 24 13. *As ſaith the Proverb of the ancients, wickedneſs proceedeth from the wicked:* But God forbid that the hand of any that fear God ſhould be upon the Lords anointed. A tender conſcience ſo far exerciſed to Godlineſs as to flee from all appearance of evil, cannot digeſt the leaſt approach to, or appearance of wrong to the Ruler: Say *I* this as a man, or ſayeth not the Scripture the ſame alſo? *ibid.* 5, v. *Davids heart ſmot him, becauſe he had cut off Sauls skirt.*

The 5*th* view of this uſeful piece preſents to us the *Exit* and retreat of the Ruler: Rulers, like men upon a Stage, walk much in a diſguiſe, or, like *Mercury*, and *Æneas*, in a cloud; but here we have the Ruler going off with open face, and with an eye to God, to himſelf, and to his reward. *Remember me O my God for good.* His eye is upon God. 1. As a *Witneſs*: for remembrance is of things known, and Gods knowledge is by ſight and

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Intuition. He that can say with *David Psal.* 119 168. *All my wayes are before thee*, may save the travel and shun the *woe* of those "that seek deep to "hide their counsel from the *Lord*, and their "works are in the dark, and they say, who seeth "us? and who knoweth it? *Isa* 29, 15. And their "turning of things upside down is as the potters "clay: they attempt more than they are able, and presume where they have no power. A proud Ruler may say to the *Lords* Messengers, *who made thee of the Kings Counsel*? But they would remember, that *Elisha* the Prophet could tell the King of *Israel* the words which the Syrian King spoke in his bed-chamber: and who told him but God that heard them? *Let* Rulers learn in their time to put God upon their counsels, and make him a witness of their practises; lest when they must goe off, they find with *Jacob*, that God was there, though they knew it not, nor called him to the Council. 2. As a *Friend*: *O my God*. Happy he, Ruler or other, who can say with his Saviour, *I go to my Father and my God*. He may, in the Apostles words, proclaim a bold defiance to all adversity: *If God be with us who shall be against us*? He may meditat terrour with the greatest security *Isa* 33, 18. Though the World should be shaken and suffer sack, he may say with the Philosopher, but upon better reason, that he is sure to be no loser: yea though Hell were poured upon him, and heaven should seem to have forsaken him, *My God*, *My God* even then shall support him, *Every one seeks the Rulers favour*; and the Ruler would study to have a friend of his

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Superior. They who court alliance and interest, would be perswaded that this is the highest. Bewar of that friend that makes God an enemy, and of that gain where God is losed. *Luther* pronounces him a Divine, who can well distinguish the Law and Gospel: and he is no less a Christian, Ruler or other, who can reconcile them in, *my God.* Wouldst thou either get or know an interest in God, take the short and sure method of the *Psalmist*, who also himself was a great Ruler, in that golden *Ps.* 16, 2. *O my soul thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord,* 3. As a *rewarder*: for his, *remember*, being a figure that putteth the antecedent for the consequent, in proper speaking is, reward me. And *shall not he render to every man according to his works? Prov.*24,12.*Ps.*62,12 *And verily there is a reward for the righteous. Fear not Abraham, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.* I fear the bad reward of some, hath tempted others to do well to themselves in their own time; but with greater reason I fear that those who are thus tempted, have but a faint respect to the recompense of reward. But God who is not unfaithful, to forget the service and labour of any, will sure be mindful of a good Ruler. If *Jehosaphat* be reproved, his faults remembred, and wrath threatned; yet his good deeds are not forgotten: *Nevertheless there are good things found in thee* 2 *Chron.* 19. 2. 3. Most frequently through the Scripture the saints petition for reward is presented in the Word, *Remember*, whereby they referr particulars to him "who is able to do abundantly above all that they

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"are able either to ask or think. *David* sayeth, *remember me*; *Jeremiah* sayeth, *remember me*; *Hezekiah* and *Nehemiah* say, *remember me*; and *Augustine* sweetly rendereth *Psal.* 8. 4. ver. *Domine quid est homo nisi quia memor es ejus? Lord, what is man but that thou art mindful of him*? And happy he whose name is written in that *Book of Remembrance* that is before the *Lord Mal.* 3. 16. And when each man comes to be rewarded, malicious opposers of reformation, and profane corrupters of Religion and the Covenant of the priesthood may readily come to be remembred *Chap* 6, 14 and 13. 29. 2. In his retreat he goes off with an eye to himself; *Remember me* &c. The Ruler who would make a honourable retreat, and come fair off, would look to 5 Things chiefly that concern himself. 1. *His conscience.* Can he say with *Nehemiah*? *chap.* 5. 19. "Remember me O my "God for good according to all that *I* have done "for this People: and *chap.* 13. 14. Remember "me O my God concerning this, and wipe not out "my good deeds that *I* have done for the house "of my God and for the offices thereof. Or with *Hezekiah* 2 King 20. 3. "*I* beseech thee O *Lord* "remember now, how *I* have walked before thee "in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have "done that which is good in thy sight? Or with *Samuel* 1 *Sam.* 12 3. "*I* have walked before you "from my Child-hood to this day: behold here *I* "am, witness against me before the *Lord*, and "before his anointed: whose ox have *I* taken? "or whose ass have *I* taken? or whom have *I* de-

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" frauded? whom have *I* oppressed? or of whose " hand have *I* received any bribe to blind mine " eyes therewith? and *I* will restore it you. Or if in any thing, as a man, he hath erred, for that he must say to God with *Nehemiah chap.* 13, 22. " Remember me O my God and spare me accord- " ing to the greatness of thy mercy. A good conscience is a strong comforter: but Gods sweet and tender mercies are the sinners last refuge and sure salvation: and it is *Bellarmines* own Conclusion. *Tutius tamen est adherere Christi Justitiæ.* And if so, why should unhappy men so voluminously dispute against their own mercy? *Psal.* 119. 77. " Let thy " tender mercys come unto me that *I* may live, was the suit of the man according to Gods heart, the pattern of Rulers. And truely this Generation would be advised to amend their manners before they change their Religion, lest under the gilded large net of *Popery*, by the Doctrine of merits, they be involved and held in the inextricable grin of desperation: Or if indulgence and pardon in end must do it, what ails them at Gods, which is infinitly better than the *Popes*, and incompareably surer, beside that it is manifestly cheaper? But for the Conscience of a Ruler, who can say with *Titus* that darling of mankind? *Non extare ullum suum factum Pœnitendum, excepto duntaxat uno.* 2. *His soul*: The Soul and Conscience are of such affinity that he who destroyes the one cannot save the other: " And what doth it profit a man though he should " gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? " Or what is the hope of the Hypocrite, though he " hath

"hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? The soul is the man, and he hath got his prize who gets that for a Prey. "The end of our faith "is the salvation of our souls *Psal.* 119. 175. "Let "my soul live, and it shall praise thee, was the care and suit of that excellent Ruler. And what a pitty is it to see a Ruler upon a retreat from the World, and from the Body, going off with such a lamentable Dirgie, as did *Adrian* the Emperour, in *Ælius Spartianus.*

Animula vagula, blandula,
Hospes comesque corporis,
Quæ nunc abibis in loca?
Pallidula, rigida, nudula,
Nec ut soles dabis jocos.

Or with such a hideous rage as *Tiberius* in *Suetonius*, like one speaking out of Hell: *Dii me Deæque pejus perdant quam quotidie perire sentio.* 3 *His fame and memory*, a matter that highly concerneth the Ruler, as in the last view shall be showen more fully. 4. *His posterity* natural or politick. 5. *His Works*, both which are expressed together in that Prayer of *Moses* the man of God *Psal:* 90. 16, 17. "Let "thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy Glo-"ry unto their Children: and let the beauty of the "Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou "the work of our hands upon us; yea the work "of our hands establish thou it. The good Ruler is not like the "Ostrich, which God hath deprived of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her

"understanding; that is hardned against her young "ones, as though they were not hers; her labour "is in vain without fear *Job* 39. 16, 17. This regard to the work of God, and to the good of posterity made *Moses* record his Song *Deut.* 31, and 32. and moved him to bless the People *chap.* 33. This moved *Joshua* to make a Covenant *chap.* 24. 25. This begot in *David* such a desire to build a house unto the Lord. This made *Hezekiah* weep bitterly, that the begun Reformation was like to cease by his death. This incited *Paul* that great Church-Ruler so zealously to warn and guard the believers against what should happen after his departure. This made *Moses* and *David* before their death so carefully give charge to their successors concerning their duty. This moveth all men naturally at their death to leave their Counsel and Blessing to their posterity. And finally, this induceth good Rulers in their time to establish good Ordinances by which being dead they may speak to posterity. 3. Like *Moses*, he makes his retreat with a respect to the recompence of reward, *Remember me, O my God, for good*. And that both proposed in the promise 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. "He hath "made with me an everlasting Covenant ordered "in all things and sure; for this is all my Salvati-"on, and all my desire; Or pledged in the testimony of a good Conscience 2 *King.* 26. 3. "Re-"member O Lord how I have walked before thee "in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done "that which is right in thy sight. He who can say with *Job* "My witness is in Heaven, and my re-

"cord

"cord on high, may justly say with *Isaiah*, my "work is with the Lord, and my reward with my "God. For surely there is an end, and the ex-"pectation of the righteous shall not be cutt off. Now by these last words of the *Tirshatha*, the Ruler would be warned, in time to think of his retreat, how he may make it good with honour. For whether slow footed Time, which changeth not his pace for fair weather or foul, for Summer or Winter, advance at the ordinary rate of Journey; or whether death take post, or changes take wing, and calamity come suddenly; or whether all these hold the ordinary road with a warning, or take the by-way with a suprisal, It is time for the Ruler to think of his removal. It is gravely observed by *Pedro Mexia*, that there is no death incident to men which hath not happened to Emperours: Discontent and Grief is so ordinar to their rank, that almost it seems to be proper: and how few of them escape a misfortune, even Children are taught from *Juvenal*.

Ad generum Cereris sine cade & sanguine pauci
Descendunt reges, & sicca morte tyranni.

And in this consideration the Prayers made for Rulers and Emperours was a very necessary devotion, sanctifyed by the command of God, and confirmed by the examples of his servants in the Scriptures. Yet the Prayers which would not let *Pompey* die in prosperity, could not relieve him of final adversity. The Ruler would always expect his summonds, "Give an account of thy stewardship, for

"thou mayest be no longer steward. The plays which are but too much in fashion, act things that are past; but the Ruler would erect a scene in his Soul, and present there the things that may and shall be; "That which hath been is the same that "is, and that which is, is the same that shall be; "and there is nothing new: The Ruler must have a successor, as he himself succeeded to another. But beyond paticulars *Dan.* 7 9. *I beheld till the thrones were cast down*, were a divertisment worthy of the Ruler; who if he would make a safe retreat, would beware of these things in particular 1. That he come not short in reality of that which was denyed *Moses* in the type *Deut*; 34, 4. The *Canaan* above, "the Land that is afar off, the rest "that remaineth for the People of God. I have "caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou "shall not go over thither. A sad matter for a ship to perish in the harbour, for a man to go to *Hell* as it were in sight of *Heaven*: for a Ruler at once to be robbed of his Soul and his Authority, who can sufficiently bewail his misery? *I* say this happened *Moses* in the type; for that he is already possest in Glory is manifest from *Heb.* 11. and *Luke* 13, 28. 2. Of *Solomons* fate, That by their Apostacy and transgression they leave not the World to dispute their salvation; as *Papists* and *Arminians* make him an instance of the final Apostacy of Saints; though they fail in probation and fall short of their Enterprise. It were the wisdom of the Ruler by his unquestioanble Goodness to put to silence evil speakers. 3. of the fate of *Joash*,

who

who for his Apostacy, ingratitude, and trespass, was taken away in a hurry with terrour and misery 2. *Chron*; 24, 23. and foreward. They who are bold to sport with Eternity would bewar that time bear not witness of their folly. 4. Of *Davids* calamity; That they entail not a Judgment to their house and posterity; "The sword shall "not depart from thy house. *I* the Lord thy God "am a jealous God visiting the iniquities of the Fa-"thers upon the Children, to the third and fourth "generation. *Manasseh* is a witness how much hereditary misery may come upon posterity for the sins of Rulers. 5. Of *Jeroboams* memory; That he bear not the brand of infamy with posterity, *who made Israel to sin.* And this inviteth me to another view.

The *6th* view of these words obviously presenteth the *Memoire of the Ruler*: And, being recorded as a part of the History, giveth this friendly and pertinent warning to all in Authority, That they would really be such as willingly they would suffer themselves by History to be represented to the World and to posterity: and that with *Job* they may say *Chap.* 31, 35. "O that mine Adversary "had written a Book! &c, *Prov.* 22, 1. A good "Name is rather to be chosen than great Riches, "and loving favour rather than silver and gold: And the Apostle recommendeth to all, "Whatso-"ever things are honest, whatsoever things are of "good report. *Cicero pro Archia* excellently saieth: *Trahimur omnes Laudis studio: & optimus quisque maxime gloria ducitur.* And *Tiberius* in *Tacitus Lib.* 4.

Annal: bringeth this so near, that in a manner he impropriateth it to the Ruler; *Ad ea Tiberius: Cæteris mortalibus in eo stare consilia, quid sibi conducere putent: Principum diversam esse sortem quibus præcipua rerum ad famam dirigenda.* So that all men in their measure, good men more, and Rulers who should be the best men, most and chiefly are governed by regard to their fame and Memory. And this is their study: though, if so their fate be, to do well and be ill spoken of, is no less Princely: according to the saying vented by *Antisthenes*, used by *Alexander*, and imitated by the Emperour *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* the *Philosopher*. The Ruler would seriously remember, That the World will not die with him: and that there will be men to speak and write when he shall not be found to answer: That fear and flattery the two abusers of living Rulers, like enraged Cowards (*nam timidissimum quodque est idem crudelissimum*) turn the most insolent avengers, and sarcastick insulters over the Dead that bite not. Let the fates of *Sejanus* that great Minion, of *Tiberius* his master, of *Domitian*, and generally all wicked Emperours and Rulers be witnesses with a warning. *Tacitus* that great state Historian, and the Rulers Author, against whom nothing can be excepted, in the entry of his *History* tells us, That the acts and affairs of *Tiberius*, *Caius*, *Claudius* and *Nero*, while they flourished were falsly represented by fear; but after they fell, were sett off with fresh hatred. If the voice of a flattering, fearful, interessed, discontented, changeable multitude be rejected as partial, or sleighted as un-

unsufficient, whose mouths notwithstanding it were better they were stopped; yet the Ruler would well consider what he leaves a *Tacitus*, an impartial Author to say, who writes *sine ira & studio, quorum causas procul habeo*; who can tell him *contemtu famæ, contemni virtutes.* But lastly the Ruler above all would consider, what he deserves at the hands of God that cannot lie, who deceiveth not nor is deceived, the faithfull witness, the soveraign Ruler of fame, unerring giver of names, and just dispenser of honours, who hath testified 1 *Sam*; 2, 30. "Them that honour me, *I* will honour, and they "that despise me shall be lightly esteemed: And *Prov.* 10. 7. "The memory of the just is blessed, "but the memory of the wicked shall rot. That Ruler hath given a desirable subject for History, and erected a fair and enduring Monument for his memory, who can say with *Nehemiah*, *Remember me O my God for good, according to all that I have done for this People, and for the house of my God*: for *Psal.* 112, 6. *The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance*; and ver. 9. *his righteousness endureth for ever, his horn shall be exalted with honour.*

F I N I S.

GRAPES
IN THE
Wilderness.

OR A

Discourse fitted to all Times,

Treating of the

Dispensations of GOD,

AND OF

The pertinent Duties and Comforts of His PEOPLE in these Times.

WITH A

Preface of the fulness of Scriptur sufficiency for Answering all Cases.

Hosea 9. 10, *I found Israel like Grapes in the Wilderness* Jer. 2, 2. *I Remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wantest after me in the Wilderness in a Land that was not sowen.* Numb. 33, 1. *These are the journeyes of the Children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of* Egypt *with their armies under the hand of* Moses *and* Aaron. 2 Verse. *And* Moses *wrote their goings out, according to their journeyes by the Commandment of the Lord, and these are their journeyes according to their goings out.* 1 *Epistle of* John 1 3 *That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you.*

Written in the Wilderness.

Edinburgh, Printed by *George Mosman*, and are to be Sold at his Shop in the *Parliament-Close, Anno Dom.* 1692.

CRAPES

OR

Delibertis:

OR A

Discourse stored to all Times,

Treating of all

Dispensations of GOD,

AND OF

The ordinance Dispensations of the
FEOFEES in Christ, Jesus.

WITH A

Practice of the Rubricks of Scripture, Philosophy,
for Assuring all Times.

Written in the Year 1658.

THE PREFACE,

THE Jews have a Tradition of that *Manna* wherewith God fed *Israel* in the *Wilderness* fourtie years, that the taste thereof was such, and so various, that it answered every mans Appetit, and tasted to him of whatsoever food his soul desired. And look how uncertain is that Jewish Tradition of the *materiall Manna* that was gathered off the Earth for the space of fourty years in the *Wilderness* of the land of *Egypt*: So certain is this Christian Truth of the *Spiritual Manna* the word of God, that bread of Heaven, that Angels food, wherewith God feeds his Church in all ages successively, and every Child of his House the *Israelite indeed* respectively, throughout the whole course of their life and travel in the World, which is the great *Wilderness*: that it hath in it a real supply of all their necessities, and hath always in it a word in season to all persons, at all times, and in every condition:

To

To the Dead, it is life: to the living, it is health: to the weary, it is refreſhment: to the weak, it is ſtrength: to Babes, it is milk: to ſtrong men, it is meat: to the hungry, it is bread: to the thirſty, it is waters: To the drooping ſoul and ſorrowful heart, it is wine: to the faint, it is apples and Pomegranats, cinnamon, ſafron, ſpiknard, Calamus and all ſpices of the merchant. To ſuch who love dainties, it is marrow and fatneſs, honey of the rock and droping from the honey-comb: to the wounded, it is the balme of Gilead: to the blind and weak ſighted, it is eye ſalve and oyntment to annoint the eyes. To ſuch neat ſouls as love to be all Glorious within, and to keep clean Garments, it is a Crown, chains of the neck, bracelets, ear-rings, pendents and Ornaments of all ſorts: and if they like to be in faſhion and to go fyne in the court of a Heavenly Converſation and communion with God, it preſents them a bright large glaſs whereat they may dayly adorn themſelves to purpoſe. This Glaſs is no falſifying nor multiplying Glaſs, but a juſt diſcovering and directing one; here are alſo diſcovered not only all the obliquities of geſture, and faults of feature; and all ſpots upon the face or cloaths; but likwiſe the very inmoſt thoughts and intents of the heart with the moſt ſubtile imaginations of the mind are here manifeſted. Here ye are directed to fit all your Soul-ornament in the fyneſt ſpiritual faſhion, and to compoſe your geſtur and order your motion, ſo as you may be able to ſtand in the preſence of *him who is greater than* Solomon. This large bright Glaſs doth ſtand in King *Solomons* bed-

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Chamber in the Book of *Canticles*, and in it you may ſee your ſelf from head to foot, There ye ſee the head beautiful with locks. *Cantic.* 4, There ye ſee the ſweet comly Countenance of the Saint, which the Lord is ſo much in love with, that he is in continual deſire to ſee it: there you ſee thoſe eyes that raviſh his heart and ſo throughout even to the feet that are very beautiful with ſhooes. *Chap.*7. 1. For ſuch as are deſtitute and unprovided, the word of God is a portion: to the poor, it is Riches of treaſure of choice Silver and fine Gold. Here is that which diſpelleth darkneſs, cleareth doubts, diſſolveth hardneſs, diſſappointeth fears, diſchargeth cares, ſolaceth ſorrows, and ſatisfieth deſires. Here is counſel and ſtrength for peace and war. Here is daily intelligence from Heaven. And in a word, here is the beſt Companion that ever a ſoul did chooſe. And bleſſed they who can ſpiritually tone that ſhort but high note *Pſal.* 119. 98. *Thy Commandments are ever with me.* And that they are not with the ſoul as a burden of idle attendants are with a man, ſee what good offices they perform by their preſence. *Prov.* 6. 22, 23. They are as *Hobab* to *Iſrael*, and *David* to *Nabal*, *Eyes* and a *Guard* to us in the *Wilderneſs.* In the World, and chiefly in this World we change ſeats and Societies, we ſhift conditions and habitations, we go thorow the *Wilderneſs* of *Baca* from troop to troop; we are driven from Temple, Altar, and Oracle, and we are divided from our relations and deareſt acquaintance whom we loved as our own Soul, we are ſpoiled of our Companions with whom

whom *we took sweet counsel and went into the house of God.* But blessed that Soul who in all this can say I am not alone, my good old friend, the word of God, the Bible the guide of my Youth hath not yet forsaken me, it is with me, yea it is in me, in the midst of my heart, and I bear about me daily a living coppy of those livly Oracles, and they are more near me than my very self: for my heart is within me, and they are within my heart. I may be separated from my self by death that parts the dearest Friends, my heart may be pluckt from my breast, and my Soul dislodged of my Body, but my Companion, the word of God and me shall nothing part. Prosperity shall not cause me forget it: And adversity will not cause it forget me. *I will never forget thy Precepts, for with them thou hast quickned me. Psal.* 119. 93. As those who live upon the shoar have a very just diall of the measure and motion of the water, which they can make use of without the sun; so are the ebbings and flowings of our affections to the word of God, the surest, most universall, and constant witnesses of our daily condition: for albeit the darkness that is upon the face of our Souls may pretend that it is night with us; yet if it be full sea in our affection to the word of God, we may be sure it is noon day: and when it is low water in our affection to the word, sure then, it is mid-night: and the sun was never seen at mid-night. Be sure, it is ill with that Soul that is out of conceit with the word of God.

Now to say nothing of the malignant qualities of gross ignorants, prophane Atheists, and obsti-

nate

nate unbelievers who are habitually diſſafected to the word of God: nor yet to mention the willful groundleſs fits of pettiſh diſtempers in Saints, who often times do even take up at their foot groundleſs and needleſs pleaes and diſcouraging apprehenſions which they cannot ſo eaſily lay down again *Pſal.* 42, 5, *Why art thou caſt down O my ſoul, and why art thou diſquieted in me?* Pſal. 77. 2. *My ſore ran in the night and ceaſed not, my ſoul refuſed to be comforted.* To paſs theſe, I ſay, as bearing no direct impeachment of the aboveſaid commendation of the abſolute ſufficiency of the word of God to anſwer all caſes; There are *three Things* that in a time of tentation, in an hour and power of darkneſs do readily concurr to diminiſh the Saints reſpects to the word of God. The firſt is, that their caſe ſeems odd, unparalleled, and unpracticable in Scripture: they find no caſe equal with theirs in all reſpects that hath been cured. 2. In their weakneſs they thereupon conclude that their caſe is really hopleſs and irremedable. But 3 The ſaddeſt of all is, that they find the word not only ſilent for them, but to ſpeak directly and aloud againſt them, as they think, ſmiting, hewing and hammering them, with ſad and heavy threatnings and intimations of determined wrath rejection and ruine to come upon them from the Lord. In all theſe they err, not knowing the Scriptures, But that yet for all this there is hope, and that the Scriptures are not to be caſten out with as unkind and uncomfortable Companions in ſuch caſes, Let theſe things be conſidered for vindication of the Scriptures to Souls thus exerciſed. And

And 1. Be it granted as the truth is, that a Soul s caſe may be ſuch for Circumſtances, that the Scriptures mention none Parallel with it in all points to have been cured (the ſame is all along to be underſtood reſpectivly of Churches and Nations as of particular perſons) yet I am confidently perſwaded, that there is no caſe now incident to any whether Nation, Church, or Perſon, but the Scripture holdeth forth ſome either as evil or worſe, whether for ſin or ſuffering that have been helped. *There hath no temptation taken you* (ſayes the Apoſtle 1 *Cor.* 10 13) *but ſuch as is common to man.* Is thy caſe ſinful? behold the Scripture tells us, that he obtained mercy who once a day thought himſelf *the chief of ſinners.* 1 *Timoth.* 1, 15. And that as an exquiſite and rare piece of mercy is ſet forth in the Goſpel, for a pattern to all thoſe who ſhould afterwards believe in Chriſt to life everlaſting. Chriſt loves to have ſinners change, and for that he puteth forth his pattern, as Merchants do their ſamplers of Rich Wares: and ſure he hath ſince that time put off many ſuch pieces, and yet the pattern ſtands forth ſhewing that their is more, abundance to ſerve all that have need. To ſay nothing of *Paul's* ſin which ſure was great enough, nor of many who ſince his time may have thought themſelves the chief of ſinners as well as he did (where I think I ſee a kind of ſtrife among mercies Clients who ſhall be moſt beholding to free Mercy and free Grace) This pattern makes it fully certain that there is mercy for the chief of ſinners be who he will, and that he, whoſoever he be

be, that ſuppoſes himſelf the chief of ſinners, is not thereby warranted to deſpair of mercy; but rather to plead the greateſt intereſt of neceſſity, and to look upon himſelf as the fitteſt ſubject for the Lord, wherein to diſplay his Glory. Is thy Caſe afflicted? And thy ſufferings extraordinary? See *Job*'s deſperate Caſe, ſee *Heman*'s diſtracted Caſe, ſee that Caſe of the Church in the Lamentations, in whoſe Caſe there is hope, though it had not been done under the whole Heaven as had been done to *Jeruſalem*. Look to the cloud of Witneſſes. Look to Jeſus *Heb.* 11. and 12. *Chapters*.

But here is the great Caſe of the troubled Soul, Cleanly ſufferings for the Exercile of my Grace, as *Job*'s, or for the teſtimony of Truth and a good Conſcience, as thoſe of all the Witneſſes and Martyrs, I could well bear: In theſe reſpects, I count it all joy to fall into diverſe temptations, and I could count it my Honour and Mercy as well to ſuffer for Chriſt as to believe in him: I could do with ſuch ſufferings as *Job* would have done with his Adverſaries Books; I could take them upon my ſhoulder, and bind them as a Crowne to me, and as a Prince would I go near unto him; But Alas! I ſuffer with an evil Conſcience, my Afflictions are to me the puniſhment of my iniquity, and the fruits of my folly. This caſe indeed, if any, requireth the Tongue of the learned, and a word in ſeaſon to the Soul that is weary of it; And if the word of God help me not here, I have loſt the Cauſe, and come ſhort of my Accounts. But there is hope in *Iſrael* alſo concern-

ing this thing. *Ezra.* 10. 2. And I find the Scripture clear in these particulars concerning this case.

1. I find indeed a great odds betwixt cleanly suffering for righteousness, and suffering meerly for ill doing. The one is a thing thank-worthy, and a Glorifying of God in the highest manner actively: the other is not thank-worthy, but is the mans misery. In the one a man hath a good Conscience, and joy therefrom: in the other a man hath an ill Conscience, with terrour and sorrow proceeding therefrom. The one gives a man good confidence of assistance, and of the spirit of Glory and of God to rest upon him: the other makes a man despond and droop. The one stops, the other opens the mouths of wicked men. Therefore sayes *Peter.* 1 *Pet.* 3, 17. *It is better if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.*

2*ly* It is clear that we ought to bear such Afflictions with the more patience, *Micah* 7, 9. *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.* Nor ought any living man to complain who suffers meerly *for the punishment of his iniquity. Lam.* 3, 39. and if he must complain let him complain to God, and bemoan his case in quietness to him. It is far better for men to bear their yoke quietly and sit alone, than to pine away in their iniquity, Mourning one to another whilst they do not Cry to the Lord. Too much whining and complaining to men will be found Labour which profiteth not, try it who will. But as a man would complain to God, so he would beware to complain of God: he would leave his complaint upon him-

self

ſelf. *Job* 10, 1. and lay the blame of his afflictions home upon himſelf. *Pſal* 38. 5. *My folly makes it ſo.*

3. It is clear from the whole Hiſtory of the Scriptures, that moſt of all the Saints Afflictions, whether conjunctly in the Body of a Church or Nation, or ſeverally in their own perſons particularly, have been the chaſtizments of their iniqui-ties and the *Rods of men*, that is, ſuch corrections as men uſe upon miſdemeaning Children: *I* find this true of publik Affliction of a whole Church or Nation.

4, *It* is clear, that the Lords Rods, whether publick or perſonal upon his ſinful People, flow from love in the fountain, are mixed with love in their courſe, and run forth into love in the *I*ſſue. *I*f this ſeem ſtrange to any, let him remember, that he who *ſpareth his Rod, hateth his Child but he that chaſteneth him betimes delivereth his Soul.* Gods thoughts concerning his People are *thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give them an expected end.* Jer. 29. 11. *And in the midſt of wrath he will remember mercy,* Habbac. 3. 2. Gods love to his People is very conſiſtent with anger, though that be even fervent to the Degree of wrath, but not with hatred; and hatred, not anger, is lov's oppoſite: an angry love is oftimes moſt profitable. *Heb.* 12. 10. Let none therefore be ſo weak and Child-witted as to conclude, *I* am ſharply ſcourged, and ſore ſmitten for my folly, therefore my Father hath caſt me off and cares not for me. And yet we find Affliction, that maketh a wiſe man mad, raiſing ſuch apprehenſions oftimes in the wiſe heart of ſtrong *David.* *I* do

not here ſpeak how the Lord cauſeth his People *to paſs under the rod, and bringeth them within the bond of the Covenant* Ezek. 20, 37. and how *he chooſes them in the furnace of Affliction Iſai* 48. 10. and that was an Affliction for ſin and ſadly deſerved Rod: And yet the Lord when he would pick out a piece of the fineſt mettal, goes neither to Coffer nor Cup-board, where the gliſtering of Peace and poſterity dazle the eyes of undeſcreet beholders; but he goes to the ſmoak and Soot of the furnace, and there he pitcheth upon the rareſt Saints of the laſt refine: The Lord goeth down to the Land of Affliction and to the houſe of Bondage to viſit his People, and there he falls in love with them, there he wooes them, and there he wedds them in their mourning Garments: For they get not the oil of joy nor the Garment of Praiſe, till the ſecond day of the Marriage, and then they riſe from the Duſt and ſhine, their light cometh and the Glory of the Lord ariſeth upon them. See *Iſai* 48. 10. cited, *Hoſ.* 2, 14. and foreward. *Iſai* 61. 3. and 60. 1. In fine, the Scripture is full of rare and ſatisfactory Expreſſions of Gods love to his People, even under ſufferings which their own wickedneſs hath procured, whereof it will appertain to ſpeak more particularly in the ſequel of our enſuing Diſcourſe.

5thly It is clear from Scripture, that there is a difference to be put betwixt ſin procuring and bringing on Sufferiugs and bitter Afflictions, and ſin diſcovered in and by ſuffering. Let God caſt a Holy *Job* in the furnace, and it will diſcover a

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ſcum, that will cauſe him ſay, *My Tranſgreſſions are infinit*, And yet the Lord himſelf ſuſtains *Job*'s Plea, that it was not for ſin that he was purſuing him.

6. It is clear that there is a great difference often times betwixt the Righteouſneſs of God, and the Righteouſneſs of Men Afflicting his People; as we ſee frequently in *David*'s Caſes. Yea I find an excellent, rare, comfortable Diſpenſation of God to his People, that he will ſometimes ſcourge them with the Golden Rod of Martyrdom, and correct their faults in an Honourable way, and chaſtiſe them ſoundly, and yet never let the World know, what is betwixt him and them. The Lord loves not to proclaim and blaze the bemoaned faults of his People, nor to make them Odious to the World which hath a bad enough Opinion of them alwayes: But if I muſt correct my Child ſaith he, I will ſtay till the World and he fall out in ſome point of Conſcience, in Faith or manners, wherefore he muſt ſuffer, and then in my Gracious Wiſdom, I will ſhew a rare Conjunction or meeting of theſe three Planets in one houſe. 1. The correction of my Child. 2. His Glory, and 3. His acceptable Duty; and I will let him earn a reward of thanks and Glory in that very ſuffering wherein I ſhall viſit his iniquities, and he ſhall give Teſtimony for me. God can go many Earands at once, and fold up many Projects in one piece of Providence: *the Lord will finiſh the whole work and cut it ſhort in Righteouſneſs, becauſe a ſhort work will the Lord make upon the earth. Rom.* 9. 28. The

Lord is good at dispatches. If the Question be then, whether God will ever Honour a Man with whom he hath a Controversie, to suffer for Righteousness? I Answer, Yes, and *I* confess *I* should hardly have been of that Judgment, if *I* had not found clear Divine truth going before me in it, comparing the whole tenor of the 38 *Psalm* with the 20. *verse* thereof: where at once the *Psalmist* is suffering from men for that which is good, and from God for his foolishness and iniquity. *Verses* 4, 5, and 18. Here it is fit to remember *Luther*'s seasonable warning, that when *David* in his Prayers speaketh of his Righteousness, we would refer it to its true correlative, to wit, towards men his enemies he was Righteous; but towards God that is his Language, *Be merciful to me O God, be merciful to me, in the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my iniquities Psal.* 51. The accuser of Gods Children will be ready to carry ill reports betwixt him and them, and to keep up an ill understanding betwixt them, if he can, and in times of suffering for their Duty he will not be idle: he will tell them a thousand Stories of their own sins, to weaken their hands and cause them believe, that God will never accept service of them, but that they shall come foul off with all their fair Essayes. Ye have heard of Gods Gracious Wisdom, and now these are the Devil's malicious wyles; but a *Syllogism* or Argument framed of one premise of Gods, and another of the Devil's, will never infer a Conclusion of Faith, and that can claime fiducial assent. Wherefore in such a mixed case,

case, (which I desire may be remembred to be very caseable) let a man freely *declare his iniquity to God and be sorry for his sin*, *Psal*: 38. 18. Let him repent and mean himself to God, who (as I have said) loves to keep his People's Counsel and to keep their faults *sub sigillo confessionis* and *under the rose*, that is, he will be to them a good Secretary, but let them cleave to that which is good, and incourage themselves in a good matter, and beware of failing in present Duty in a discourageing sense of former iniquities: for one fault will never mend another, and yet that is even the best method that *Satan* useth to offer in such cases: But the Lord, that hath chosen *Jerusalem*, rebuke him, for troubling his poor afflicted People, who are as brands plukt out of the fire. *I* have insisted upon this case, because of it self it is a weighty deserving one; and *I* have not seen any who hath directly spoken to it, but one who dispatcheth it to good purpose in a word. *It* is worthy Mr. *Scudder* in his *Christians dayly walk*, (this book was by Famous Mr. *Alexander Henderson* recommended and gifted as a *vade mecum* or pocket piece to his friend, at that time a young Gentlman going into France) where, *page* 263 he speaketh thus. "You "will say, if you did bear Afflictions for Christ, "then you could think and expect well of it; but "you oftimes suffer Affliction justly for your sin. *I* "Answer (saith he, for he had been speaking of "that Scripture, 2 *Cor*. 4. 17, 18) though this "place principally point at Martyrdom and suffer-"ing for Christs cause; yet it is all one in your case

"if you will bear Afflictions patiently for his ſake:
"A man may ſuffer Afflictions for Chriſt two ways.
"Firſt when he ſuffereth for his Religion and for
"his cauſe. *2dly* when a man ſuffereth any thing
"that God layeth on him quietly and for Chriſts will
"and commands ſake. This Latter is more general
"than the former, and the former muſt be compre-
"hended in this Latter: els the former ſuffering for
"Chriſts cauſe, if it be not in love and obedience for
"Chriſts ſake, out of Conſcience to fulfil his will,
"is nothing: whereas he that endureth patiently
"endures Affliction for Chriſt, though he never be
"put to it to ſuffer for profeſſion of Chriſt: and if
"ſuch an one were put to it, he would readily ſuf-
"fer for Chriſts cauſe: and ſuch Afflictions as theſe
"thus patiently endured, work alſo this excellent
"weight of Glory as well as the other. By theſe
"and the like reaſonings of faith, you may work
"your Souls to patience as *David* and others have
"done by *caſting Anchor on God* and on his word,
"fixing their ſtay and hope in God. Let the iſſue
"of your reaſoning be this, I will wait on God, and
"yet for all matter of diſquietment will praiſe him
"who is the health of my countenance and my God.
Thus Mr. *Scudder*, and truely none could have ſpoken more, nor to better purpoſe in ſo few words.

And thus have *I* ſpoken to Scripture examples of caſes Parralleling the weightieſt of caſes, incident to any man now living. Only be it remembered that caſes are as faces, many agree in ſome things ſome in many things, none in all things. There is in every mans caſe ſomething peculiar, aggravating it beyond

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that of another man, and (as the Heart knows its own grief) every man knows best the plague of his own Heart; but he knows not, at least feels not his Neighbours sores: Hence every one judgeth his own case worst of all, it may be the best is bad enough, and yet the worst is not so bad but it may be better.

In the second place, for Vindication of the Scriptures from the foresaid disheartning prejudices, I shall lay down this very self-ground whereupon the querulous Soul doth walk, though with a halting foot. *That those Cases are hopeful and cureable that are paralleled and practicable in Scripture*, that is to say, That such whereof the Scripture gives account, have been either hopeful and curable, or actually have been cured and helped. And thus I reason, *è converso*, or by exchange. That case is hopeful and curable which is paralleled and practicable: But such is thy case, it hath a match in Scripture, and therefore curable. That is Paralleled and hath a match in Scripture I prove thus: A case concluded hopeless hath a match in Scripture: But such is thy case, thou concludes it hopeless: And therefore it hath a match in Scripture. That a case concluded hopeless hath a match in Scripture, it is clear, in that the Lord finds fault with those in *Jeremiah*, that said their was no hope, and assures them there is hope; if they will return and repent. It is clear likewise from the Churches case in *Isaiah*, who said her judgment was passed over of the Lord, and for that is taxed, that she spoke unreasonably. Likewise from *David*'s case in the *Psalms*, that said, *He was cut off from God's presence*, and yet he found

found heart to look again to God, and to cry to him and was heard, notwithſtanding his former peremptorineſs: Likewiſe from the caſe of the Church, or *Jeremiah* for the Church in the *Lamentations*, who with one breath ſaid, *My hope and my ſtrength is periſhed from the Lord*, and at the next breath could ſay, *This I call to mind, therefore have I hope.* And thereupon hath left a general experimental inſtruction to all others, *That it is good that a man ſhould both hope and quietly wait for the ſalvation of the Lord, Lament.* 3. 26.

But in the third place, The Soul affected is to be advertiſed and put in mind, that it is an error and weakneſs to think that matchleſs and unparalleled caſes, are therefore hopleſs and uncureable: For it is to be conſidered, that Scripture inſtances and examples of parallel matching caſes, are neither the only, nor compleat, nor principal ground of curing and reſolving caſes: For ſome caſes were the firſt of their kind, and ſo could have no precedent, nor yet practicable example: And yet in that caſe, according to this crazie principle, *That no unparalleled Caſe is curable*, the very fixed examples and choice copies of curable caſes ſhould themſelves have remained uncurable, as having no precedent nor example: but the only ſquare and compleat ground of curing all caſes, is the whole Scripture, whereof examples are but a ſmall part, and that too, but as the illuminating colours, and not the ſubſtantial lineaments thereof: For *exempla illuſtrant*, examples do but enlighten things, and all that an example can do, is to ſhow that ſuch a caſe is

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practicable, and potentially curable: But it doth not. it cannot actually cure it. Wherefore the principal, yea proper ground of resolving and curing all cases, are the universal fundamental truths of the Gospel, the knowledge of God and Christ, and of God in Christ according to the Gospel, whereof the Covenant of Grace is the sum and text; and this *David* knew right well 2 *Sam.* 23.5. This Covenant will mend all the holes of the believers house, and compleatly fit every case he can be in: *Till the foundations be destroyed* it is never time to ask, *what can the Righteous do?* *Psal.* 11.3. But so long as there is a God in Heaven that doth wonders, so long as Christ is all, and in all, and so long as Gods Covenant with his Saints endures, which shall be while Sun and Moon endure, and longer too, For his Covenant shall live to lay its hands upon those two shining Eyes of this corruptible World that is passing and posting off daily, and which now (like the first Covenant, *Heb.* 8. 13.) decaying and waxing old, is ready to evanish and die; So long (I say) as these foundations stand sure, the righteous, in every case may still know what to do: *For upon these shall Mercy be buile, and Faithfulness established in the very Heavens,* *Psal.* 89. 2. *I* shall illustrate this consideration with the case of Relapses, a case right perplexing to exercised Spirits, and wherein they find the Scripture sparing of examples, at least of frequent relapses into the same fault, which, makes them apprehend there is no hope. These *I* write, not that any should sin (and sure for that very cause, the Spirit of God in Wisdom

dom hath beeen more ſparing of ſuch examples) but if any man have ſinned and relapſed often into ſin, Let him remember. 1. Chriſt's *Seventy times Seven times. Matth* 18, 22. And withall, that as far as Heaven is above the earth, ſo far are his wayes above our wayes, and his thoughts above ours. *Iſai.* 55. 9. Let him remember. 2, The indefinit promiſes *Ezek* 18. 27. and the like, That when and what time ſoever a ſinner ſhall repent, he ſhall find mercy, 3. Let him remember chiefly, *the blood of Chriſt that cleanſeth us from all ſin.* 1 *John* 1; 7. And 4*thly* if he muſt have examples, Let him read the Hiſtory of *Iſrael*'s relapſes in the book of *Judges*, Notwithſtanding which, the Lord as often as he heard their penitent cryes, returned, and Repented, and ſent them Saviours. And let him read a notable place *Pſalm* 78. 38. 40. *In* the 38 *verſe*, many a time he delivered them, and forgave them: but how many times did he that? in the 40. *verſe*, how many a time did they provoke him? Even as often as they provoked him, as often he forgave them: And when any man ſhall tell me preciſely how often they provoked him, *I* ſhall then tell him peremptorly how often he forgave them. A ſimple Soul may poſſibly think to prevail with God at a time, by pleading thus after the manner of men: Help me O Lord this once, and pardon my ſin, and *I* ſhall never trouble thy Majeſty again. *I* apprehend ſuch are ſometimes the thoughts of ſome. But when Heaven and earth ſhall be meaſured in one line, when God ſhall be as man or as the ſon of man, when his ways ſhall

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be as our ways, and his thoughts as our thoughts; when I ſhall ſee the man that ſhall not be beholding to mercy, Or the day wherein we ought not to Pray, *forgive us our debts*, or the time when it ſhall be lawful to limit *the Holy one of Iſrael*, then ſhall *I* think that a convenient Argument: But if *I* underſtand the Goſpel, it might be more beſeeming God and his Grace in the Goſpel, to plead after this manner; O Lord be gracious to me and forgive me this once; And if ever *I* need, *I* ſhall come to thee again. Providing always that the Grace of God be not turned into wantonneſs, nor this our liberty uſed for an occaſion to ſin.

Now for confirmation of what hath been ſaid in this conſideration, I ſhall apply my ſelf briefly to two places of Scripture. The firſt is *Pſal* 22, 7. where I obſerve theſe things from the whole tenor of the *Pſalm*. 1. A ſaint's caſe may be right odd, and in many things without a match, *but I am a worme and no man, a reproach of men* &c. 2. I ſee in afflicted Saints a ſtrong inclination to aggrege their own caſe, and to reaſon themſelves out of caſe, with a ſort of pleaſure, *verſe* 4. *Our Fathers truſted in thee, and thou deliveredſt them*; but I am not like other men, *I am a worme and no man*, the very language of dejected Spirits to this day. 3. I ſee, that when they have reaſoned themſelves never ſo far out of account, beyond all example or match of caſe Parrallel, there is yet ſome further ground, for the faith of the deſolate Soul to travel upon, in its ſearch for diſcoveries of light and comfort, for we ſee how he goes on complaining,

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ſearching, believeing, and Praying till he arrives at Praiſe. which ever lyes at the far end of the darkeſt Wilderneſs that a Saint can go thorow: for when a Saint is in the thickeſt darkneſs and under the greateſt damps, there is ſtill *aliquid ultra*, ſomething before them; and that is, "light "for the righteous, and joy for the upright in "heart, 4. *I* ſee that a humble well tamed Soul will ſtoop right low to lift up ſuch grounds of hope and incouragement, as to a Soul that is lifted up might ſeem but ſlender and mean: *thou tookeſt me from my mothers belly, and cauſed me to hope upon the breaſts.* A humble faith will winn its meat amongſt other folks feet, and when all examples fail ſuch, they will find an example in themſelves furniſhing them with matter of hope. 5. *I* ſee there may be extant ſignal and manifeſt evidences of Gods kindneſs to his People in former times, and in caſes as preſſing as the preſent, the Memory whereof, for a long time may be darkned with the prevailing ſenſe of incumbent preſſures. *verſe* 21. *ſave me from the Lyons mouth, for thou haſt heard me from the horns of the unicorns.* 6. Though all Parallels and matching examples of other mens caſes fail a Saint; yet to him it is ſufficient ground of Faith and matter of Praiſe, that his own caſe hath been helped, when once it hath been as ill as now it is, *thou haſt heard me from the horns of the unicorns*; and therefore *I will declare thy name amongſt my brethren, in the midſt of the Congregation will I praiſe thee.* 7. *If* there muſt be examples of leading caſes, if ſo *I* may call them, then ſome muſt be the ex-

example by being first in that case: And thus oftentimes, he that finds no Parallel before him, leaves one behind him: And indeed we should be as well content, if so the will of God be, to be examples to others of suffering affliction and enduring tentations, as to have examples of others, Therefore sayes he, verse 27. *All the ends of the World shall remember this*, and in the last verse, *They shall declare to the people that shall be to come, that he hath done this.*

The 2*d* place of Scripture *I* direct my thoughts to is *Job.* 5. 8, 9. *Job*'s case was clearly unparallel'd and absolutly matchless: And sayes *Eliphaz* the *Temanite*, *I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause.* And that he might do that upon good ground, he shewes in the 9 *verse*, for (sayes he) *God doth great things.* Why, sayes the Soul, mine is a great case, then he doth great things; Why, *I* know what he doth: No, neither thou nor all the World knows that, nor can find it out for *he doth unsearchable things.* Whether that he is a God that cannot be known, be a greater mercy. or that he is an unknown God be to us a greater misery, is that which *I* know not: but this *I* know well, that more of the knowledge of God, and larger thoughts of him would loose many a knot, and answer many a perplexing case, to his People. Yea, but sayes the Soul, it shall be a wonder, a very miracle if ever my case mend; Why, then sayes *Eliphaz*, *he doth marvelous things.* Yea but God's wonders are not his every-dayes work; but they are a few rare pieces of his kindness shewed to

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eminent Saints, and great favourities, And we are not obliged to expect wonders: Yet, *I* hope you are obliged to believe Gods word, that he doth ſuch things, and thoſe too *without number*; and you are obliged to obey Gods voice, to ſeek unto him, and unto him to commit your cauſe, and you are obliged to give God his own latitude, and as well not to limit him if he will do wonders, as not to tempt him to wait for wonders: And *Pſal.* 88. 10. *wilt thou ſhew wonders to the dead*? makes it clear, that God will turn the courſe of nature upſide down, and make the World Reel as we ſee *Pſal.* 18. at length, And will do wonders to purpoſe, that even the dead ſhall be witneſſes of, before that his beloved be not delivered. Now to deſcend into the particular grounds of the cures of Saints caſes, were to go through all the Attributes of God, all the offices of Chriſt, all the promiſes of the Goſpel, and Articles of the Covenant of Grace, which are the ſubſtantial Lineaments of that well contrived piece the Word of God, which is ſo well illumnated with the lively colours of examples ſufficient, and thoſe ſo well mixed and ſo juſtly diſtinguiſhed, one having what another wants, and the other having what it wanted, and wanting what it had, that it ſpeaks the finger of God to have done it, and leaves a defiance to nature and Art once to come near it.

In the Fourth place *I* offer this to be conſidered by the Soul diſtempered, that is like to fall unkind with the Word of God, thorow an apprehenſion, That all the threatnings of the Word are directly a-

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gainst it. That all the most peremptory and severe threatnings of the Word are to be understood and qualified with the exception of Repentance. This is clear, 1. from Christs express Word. *Luke* 13. 3. 5. *except ye repent ye shall all perish.* 2*ly* from the account of events wherein we see that the most peremptory threatnings have been diverted, and their execution prevented by Repentance: witness, with many others, the cases of *Hezekiah* and the *Ninevits*. 3. From the exhortations and Expostulations annexed to threatnings, with a Solemn Declaration of the Lords Gracious dislike of mens Misery, whereof the Scripture is full. In a word, the humble penitent is worse Feared, than hurt with threatnings. And even as a plentiful rain quenches thunders, allayes the violence of Storms and Tempests, and both tempers and calms the Air; So the Tears of Godly Repentance, compose the Thunder-and Weather-beaten Soul that is tossed with the Tempests of Thundering threatnings. In the 32, *Psalm*, there was a great Storme in *David*'s Conscience. *He roared all day long*; &c. But a free work of sincere Repentance Calmes all, and leavs the Soul quiet and serene: *David* takes a House upon his head, he refuges himself in God by faith, and then let it hit the unhappiest, *Thou art my hiding place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble, thou shalt compass me about with Songs of deliverance Selah.* Verse 7.

By this time, I hope, it doth in some measure appear, that the Scriptures are not wanting, in the performance of all offices of kindness, that can

Rationally be required in the moſt unpromiſing caſes: And that they are much to be blamed who upon any of the foreſaid pretences would pick quarrels againſt the Scriptures. But ſuch deal not fairly, neither are their wayes equal: and I may well ſay to them, is this your kindneſs to your freind? ſure the Scriptures have not deſerved any ſuch ſervice of your hands.

See Grenhams *directions for reading the Scriptures.*

Now to the Soul that would keep up kindneſs with the Scriptures, and ſo would be mighty in the Scriptures, I leave theſe Directions in ſhort words:

1. Acquaint thy ſelf with the whole Scripture, and all Scripture both in its letter and meaning: for that is to know the Scriptures: Otherways, it is but an unknown Tongue to him that is unacquainted either with the phraſe or meaning of it. The Soul that is thus acquainted with all Scriptures, if one Scripture bind it, another will looſe it: if one wound it, another will heal it: if one caſt it down, another will comfort it.

2. Be a careful keeper of the word of God in practice. *David* felt, and every Soul that hath their Senſes exerciſed will feel their Affection to, and proficiency in the Scriptures grow according to their practice of the Scriptures. *Pſal.* 119. 56. *This I had becauſe I kept thy Precepts*, And Chriſt teacheth plainly, that he that is a doer of the will of God, is faireſt to know the Doctrine that is of God. I know no ſuch way to be a good Scholar, as to be a good Chriſtian.

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3. Intertain the Spirit of God, if you would have either comfort or profit of the word: *Isai* 59, 21. the Spirit and the Word are promised together: *John* 6. 63. Christ tells us that *his Words are spirit and life.* 1 *Cor.* 2, 10. and foreward, it is the Spirit that doth all by the Word: and 1. *John* 2, 27. *It is the anointing that teacheth all things.* One sayes well of *Paul's* Epistles that no man can understand them without *Paul's* Spirit: And so may be said of all Scripture. Sight is as needful as light, els blind men might judge of Colours: And if the Spirit were not as needful as the Word of Faith, then blind sense and hasty unbelief would not stand to say that all men are Lyars, and that God's Truth failes for ever. The material Doctrines and objective Revelations of the Word and Spirit are ever the same: And a Spirit clashing with the Word, is surely a Ghost and an evil Spirit. But the Word and Spirit in the conveyance and delivery of the self-same Revelations, are oftimes separat in their influences: for sometimes the Word comes alone without the Spirit to those who have eyes and see not. &c. Sometimes again the Spirit comes with a discovery of the same Truth that is in the Word without the help of the Word, as to Infants, deaf Persons, and even others at age and having the use of their ears; but being not well versed in the Scriptures, yet desiring to know and do the will of God, are oftimes, no doubt, by a secret immediate instinct of the Spirit, of God, without the actual remembrance and help of the Word of God, taught and instructed

acccording to the Word: for God leads the blind by a way that they know not. And the Apostle 1 *Pet*: 3. 1. tells us, that some men at age, by good example may be won without the Word: Why then may not the Spirit of God do, what the example of a Christian woman can do? But that it concerns all that would converse comfortably with the Scriptures, to call the Spirit of God to their assistance is manifest from this, That there are many, and those the most concerning Questions, that fall under a Christians Cognition to be resolved according to the Word of God, which are determinable only by the Spirit of God: even all these that may most desevedly be called *the things of a man*, which none knows, and therefore cannot competently judge of, but the Spirit of God that knoweth all things, and the Spirit of the man, and that not either without a special presence and assistance of the Spirit of God: Nay if you should conveen about these Questions a Council or General Assembly, of the learnedst Doctors or ablest Divines in Christendome, they could not define them: Such are the Questions of a Man's personal interest in God, and his state toward God, whether a man have the Spirit and be born of God, and the like. They may give evidences of these things in the general, and indefinitly, which may be as *media* to conclud upon, and which they may frame into universal propositions, that he who hath these evidences is of God &c. But to subsume to those propositions, and from these premisses to conclude particularly, belongs only to the Spirit

of

of God witneſſing with our Spirits that we are the Children of God: for by the Spirit we know the things that are freely given us of God. The like is to be ſaid of many particular matters of fact that concern a man. I inſtance in one, but it is a main on. The nature of the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, *I* find the beſt adviſed Divines very warry (as they have Reaſon) to determine in: and yet more awar of perſonal application of their determinationss, becauſe of latent circumſtances impoſſible to be infallibly reached and diſcerned by any man in his neighbour. Now whether is my ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt? is a Queſtion ſo puzling and perplexing oftimes (ſome know what *I* ſay) even to ſuch as are dear to God, that it paſſes the reach of all created wiſdom to ridd their doubt. And let me ſay only by the way, there is no more compendious method in the World, to draw or rather to drive a man to the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, than the apprehenſion that he hath already ſinned that ſin: for that apprehenſion renders him deſperat, and what will not a deſperat man do? O cunning *Devil*! But O wiſer God! that gives ſubtilty to the ſimple, and makes them able to ſtand againſt the wyles of *Satan*. But how is the Queſtion ridd? *I* anſwer, the Spirit of God rids it thus, according to the Scripture: That ſurely is not the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, whereof a man repenteth. Now when the Soul is at its wits end, and ready to ſink, the Spirit of God ſendeth ſuch a looſe, into the Soul of the ſinner, of Godly ſorrow unto repentance, for that ſin whereof he was

ſo jealous, and the Soul of him ſo joyes in his ſorrow, and ſorrows with his joy (*de peccato dolet, & de dolore gaudet*) that he cannot be ſatisfyed nor get his fill of that Godly ſorrow, which is ſo warme with love, and ſo wet with tears, that except a man that is wet to the Skin ſhould deny that he has gotten the ſhowre, he cannot deny but he repents of that ſin: And than ſure he is not a ſinner againſt the Holy Ghoſt, For it is impoſſible to renew ſuch an one to Repentance. I do not here mean, that only an overflowing power of Repentance, ſuch as I have ſpoken of, is a cure in the caſe: no; for the very deſire of Repentance vindicats a man from any fear of this ſin, (becauſe a ſinner againſt the Holy Ghoſt, ſo ſins and ſo delights to ſin that ſin, that he would not do otherwiſe, if it were in his choiſe.) But when the Soul's perplexities about this queſtion are overwhelming, then it is fit that they be cured with this meaſure of Repentance that is ſo overflowing. *I* marked before, and *I* mind it again, as good Showrs calme and clear the Air, ſo, much Repentance it clears many doubts, reſolves many Caſes, ridds the Soul from many perplexities, and ſettles it in a ſweet calme and ſerenity.

The Fourth Direction *I* give to thoſe that would keep ſo in with the Scriptures, as to make uſe of them with comfort and profit is this, that they deſpiſe not the Diſcipline of tentations. Book-learned Chriſtians and Divines are not the beſt Scholars: but they that would be taught the myſteries and Acroamaticks of Religion and Divinity,

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muſt be *Luther*'s Condiſciples; and he was bred at the School of Tentations: he confeſſed, that his tentations had learned him more of the Goſpel than all his books had done. This School of tentations is of an old erection: and (not to ſpeak of others) here our Lord Jeſus took all his Degrees. Hence he was commenced Maſter of experiences, and Doctor univerſal in all caſes: *for in that he ſuffered being tempted, he is able alſo to help thoſe that are tempted: and in all things he was tempted as we are*, that he might ſuccour them that are tempted. *Heb.* 2. 17, 18. and 4, 15. And as his temptations accompliſhed him highly, for the reſt of his Mediatory Work, ſo particularly and eſpecially for the Miniſtery: theſe were his Tryalls for the Miniſtery, *Mdatth.* 4. at the beginning, *he is tempted*, and in the 17 *verſe*, *from that time Jeſus began to Preach.* Wherefore let Miniſters remember, that if they be tempted, the Lord is giving them the higheſt point of breeding for their imployment. But *bleſſed is the man that endureth temptation* (or bides out the Tryal) *for when he is tryed, he ſhall receive the Crown of life which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him.* James 1, 12. Now having thus ſpoken at length to the Commendation of Scripture what excellent uſes it ſerves to in all caſes, and what kind Offices it performes to the People of God in every condition, Let us for Concluſion behold how it ſhewes to us the kindneſs of the Lord, in that *Jethro*-like it comes to viſit us in the Wilderneſs; And let us hearken what it will ſay to us there: For there we are. Text

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Text Hoſea 2. 14.

Therefore behold, I will allure her and bring her into the Wilderneſs, and ſpeak comfortably unto her.

INTRODUCTION.

WE have in the contexture of this *Chapter*, a ſolemn confirmation of three great Truths, that are noted in the Scripture of Truth.

1. *That the Lord will not caſt off his People, nor forſake his Inheritance*, Pſal. 94. 14. Which general aſſertion it will be fit to clear in theſe particular Propoſitions. 1. God will never caſt off the univerſal Church, nor leave himſelf deſtitute of a People upon the Earth, who may owne him and his Truth, and may hold forth the Word of Life, ſhining as Lights in the World, being blameleſs and harmleſs in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe generation. Thus in our Creed, *We believe a Church Uni-*

Universal, which sometimes is cloathed in Scarlet, and sometime again is set upon the Dunghill: Sometimes is courted of the multitude in the City, and sometimes is persecuted and driven to the Wilderness: Sometimes is more visible and glorious, in the incorporat Societies of National Churches, sometimes more latent and obscure in some few single persons scattered up and down in the World; who, it may be, in their time, are as little observed by the World, as the seven thousand true Worshipers were by *Elias* in his time. There is a time, *Prov.* 28. 12. when *a man is hidden*; And the Lord in the worst of times hath *his hidden ones*, Psal. 83. 3. And when *judgement returns unto righteousness, all the upright in Heart will follow after it*, Psal. 94. 15.

2. God may utterly reject and totally cast off the visible Body of a particular Church: Witness the Church of the Jews at this day, and the seven famous Churches of *Asia*.

3. God may sententially reject his People by Threatnings, when he doth it not, nor minds to do it eventually and effectually in his Dispensations. God may *lift up his Hand against his People to overthrow them*, and he may say by his threatnings, *That he will destroy them*, as it is *Psal.* 106. 23. 26. When yet they are spared: he may frame a Bill of Divorse against his Church but not give it her into her hand, *Zeph.* 2. 2. The Decree, or the threatning intimating the Decree is one thing, and the bringing forth of the Decree, or the execution of that Threatning is another thing.

thing. Repentance will obtain both a Suſpenſion and Repeal of a Sentence of rejection. In a word, God may caſt out with his people, and not caſt them off for all that: He may Cenſure them within doors, when he minds not to put them to the door: The Lord may ſay, he cannot owne a Whore, and yet he is Married to her: and he threatens to caſt off a Whore, that ſo he may keep ſtill an honeſt Woman.

4. God may really and effectually caſt out his People, when yet he doth not caſt them off: A Whore may be put to the door and taken home again, *Jer.* 3. 1. A Leprous *Miriam* may be put out of the Camp and taken in again: God may not only ſay by his threatnings, but ſeem to confirm it by his Diſpenſations, that his People are out-caſts, and yet *He gathers the out-caſts of* Iſrael, *Pſal.* 147. 2. The Lord hath oft times in his Diſpenſations ſo ſhewed himſelf to his People, teſtifying his Diſpleaſures againſt them; that even thoſe who were more than common Counſellors with God, and were beſt acquaint with his wayes have had right ſad apprehenſions of total off-caſting, *Jer.* 14. 19. *Haſt thou utterly rejected* Judah? *Pſal.* 85. 5, 6. *Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all Generations? Wilt thou not revive us again that thy people may rejoyce in thee?* And yet in the 9*th verſe* (and O! if this were the anſwer for the Mourners and inquirers in *Scotland*,) *his ſalvation is near them that fear him, that Glory may dwell in our land.* So that theſe are three very different things, 1. Gods caſting out with his People

People. 2. His casting out his People. And 3. his casting his People off.

5. God may reject one Generation of a Church or Nation, as a Generation of his wrath, and yet his Covenant stand with the same Nation or Church: Witness that Generation with whom the Lord's Spirit was grieved fourty years, and whose Carcases fell in the Wilderness.

6. God may cast off the Incorporation of a Church or Nation, whereof sometimes he reserves a remnant to whom he will be gracious, and with whom he will establish his Covenant, *Paul Rom.* 11 at the beginning shews, that be with *Israel* as it will, *God will not cast off his own Elect*, such as he himself was. And *Rom.* 9 27: though a number like the sand of the Sea be destroyed, *Yet a remnant shall be saved*, as saith *Isaiah* chap. 1, vers, 9. And that is the grand consolation, when all goes to all, *That of all that the Father hath given him, Christ will lose none*, Joh. 6. 39. A Son of perdition when he meets with a temptation may go from Christ's very elbow, both to Hell and the Halter at once: But however such may be lent to Christ to make use of in a common Service for a time; yet certain it is, that they have never been given to him for Salvation. But yet *God is good to* Israel. *Psal.* 73. 1.

But here two distinctions are fit to be remembered, The 1. is *Paul*'s distinction *Rom.* 9, 6. betwixt *Israel* and those that are *of Israel*. Common Professors, Carnal Hypocrites and unbelievers may expect little mercy in a time of publick off-casting of a Church or Nation. The 2d distinction

on is *Hosea's* in this *Chapter*, betwixt the *Children of a Whore* and the *Children of her Whoredoms*. This Whorish Church had lawfully begotten Children *Ammi* and *Ruchamah*, to whom the Prophet, who likwise himself was one, and a brother of those Children, is commanded to apply himself, and of these there were few in that time of publick Apostacy. But then in the *4th verse* of this *Chapter* there are the ill begotten Children of her Whoredoms, whose names in the 1 *Chapter* were called *Loammi* and *Loruchamah*, and these were many. The Children of Whoredoms are those who comply in judgment or practice with the common course of a Churches Apostacy, whose Faith and Principles (if they have any) are not the fruit of the immortall seed of the incorrupted Word of God; but of the inventions and Commandments of men, or the delusions and impostures of *Satan*, which their Adulterous Mother, the Church that so breeds them, (who is damned for that she hath forsaken her first faith) is so fond of. If a Woman be a gaudy, light Person, it may readily render her Children suspected: but if she be an arrand notorious Whore, then it is too likely, and in the case of Religion, it is almost necessary and certain, that *si Mater Meretrix, Filia talis erit.* If the mother be a Whore, the Daughter will be such also, and so the Proverb shall be fulfilled *Ezek.* 16. 44. *As is the Mother so is the Daughter.* Papists breed their Children Papists, and other Folk breed their Children such as they themselves are, and few Children make their Fathers

Religion

Religion better: and therefore ſad is the caſe of young ones that fall into corrupt times: and ſad is the condition of theſe times wherein young ones are bred corrupt. There is little appearance, if Soveraign goodneſs interpoſe not, that they ſhall ſoon be better: Becauſe a perſon ordinarly perſiſts in thoſe Principles wherewith they have been firſt poſſeſſed by education: for *Solomon* tells us that *whatſoever way a Child is trained up in, he will not depart from it when he is old*: and, *quo ſemel eſt imbuta recens ſervabit odorem teſta diu.* A new veſſel will keep the firſt ſcent long. But moreover there is real ground of fear, that ſuch times ſhall ſtill grow worſe and worſe: for evil beginnings have worſe proceedings, *they proceed* (ſaith the Prophet) *from evil to worſe*; Jer. 9, 3. And *evil men and ſeducers*, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, *proceed and wax worſe and worſe, deceiving and being deceived.* 2 Timoth. 3. 13. *I hid me and was wroth*, ſaith the *Lord*, Iſai. 57, 17. *And he went on frowardly in the way of his heart*: And what ſhall the end be? and where will they ſtand? if the Lord ſay not that alſo which followes in the 18. *verſe*, *I have ſeen his wayes, and I will heal him.* Prelacy will breed Popery to which it naturally inclines. Profanneſs will make a ſtraight path to Atheiſm and Barbarity. Ignorance will nouriſh ſuperſtition. Formality, Indifferency, Looſneſs, Lightneſs, and Luxuriancy of wanton-witted Preachers eſpecially (but God be thanked, their skill is not ſo good as their will, nor their wit ſo great as their wantoneſs, and they are like evil favoured old Whores out

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of case to do worse; and therefore they must entertain their paramours with painting for beauty, and complement for courtesie) will foster Heresy. Ceremonies straight way will learn to say Mass; and then κυριε ελεησον, Lord help it. But the other sort of Children that are the *Children of the Whore*, yet *not of her Whoredoms*, but of her Marriage bed, are these whose Faith is the off-spring of that first Faith of the Apostat Church, and that unspoted chaste Religion which she professed, before she forsook her first Faith and brake her Covenant of Marriage; and who owne their righteous Father, whom their Whorish Mother hath dishonoured and forsaken, and who with grief and shame make mention of the lewdness of their Mother, who mourn for her back-slidings, and plead (as here in the 2*d verse* they are commanded) for the honour and right of their Father: With these it shall not fare worse for their Mothers cause, for they are fellow sufferers of reproach with their Father, and they bear his name: nor will he deny his interest in them, they are *Ammi*, nor yet will he refuse them Fatherly kindness and Duty, they are *Rubamah* to him: And though their base Mother by Adulterating her Faith doth forfeit her dowry of the priviledges of a true Church; yet their Righteous Father will find himself obliged by their Mothers Marriage Covenant and contract, to give them the Inheritance of lawfully begotten Children: and they shall be kept and brought up in his House, when she shall be sent off to call her Lovers *Baali*, with her Adulterous

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Brats at her foot, who cry Father to *Balaam.* If I might insist, this consideration would clear the case well betwixt us and the *Popish Church*: But to speak to a purpose nearer us, If our Mother will Debord, let us tell her of it, and plead with her: If that cannot help it, let us be sorry for it: But let us not in any thing be partakers with her Adulteries, lest we be thought Bastards: Let us owne our Father, and Study to be like him, even to be living Pictures of his Divine Nature, that so it may be out of all question that we are his own lawfully begotten Children, when we *Bear his Name upon our Foreheads*, Rev. 22. 4. and that is, *Holiness to the Lord*, *Zach.* 14. 20. Now these are they, even these who study sound Faith, and sincere Holiness, that go the World as it will, and let Gods Dispensations and their own apprehensions say what they will, shall never be forsaken nor cast off of God, *Psal.* 9. 10. *Thou Lord hast not forsaken them that seek thee*: Psal. 37. 25. *David* in his old Age who had seen many things in his time; Yet *never had he seen the Righteous forsaken.* Joh. 6. 37. *Him that cometh to me*, sayes Christ, *I will in no wise cast out*, Heb. 13. 5. the Lord hath said, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

II. The Second grand Scripture Truth that is confirmed so solemnly in the context of this Scripture, is, That *all the wayes of the Lord to his People are mercy and truth*, Psal. 25. 10. We see in the former part of this *Chapter*, in the 8*th. verse*, so long as she obeys and serves God, what kindness he shews

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her, he lets her want for nothing: And though ſhe moſt ſhamefully playes the wanton under all that Mercy, yet long he forbears her, and is ſtill giving her, till ſhe begins inſolently to reflect upon the Lord, and to ſpeak more kindly of her Lovers than of him: Then the Lord, as one that cannot endure to be ſo far diſparaged, as to have it ſaid that there is any Service or Fellowſhip ſo good as his, finds it now time that ſhe be taught, that ſhe can no where do ſo well as with her own firſt Husband: And this ſhe muſt learn in the *Wilderneſs*, where he remembers mercy in the midſt of wrath, and as it were forgets what he had even now been ſaying, and from threatning falls a comforting and alluring of her, and there intertains her with the moſt convincing expreſſions of Love and Reſpects. And we may mark eſpecially in the Text propoſed, how the Lord loves not to tell his people ill News, and that he deſires, in a manner, to tyne his threatnings in the telling, if it could be for his Peoples good; or, at leaſt to tell them ſo cannily and convey them ſo artificially, and as it were, inſenſibly, and by the by; and withall to drop them out ſo ſparingly, as that they may neither hinder nor hide his great deſign of love and alluring Mercy. *I will allure her, and bring her into the Wilderneſs, and ſpeak comfortably unto her*: And when the Lord hath gained his great deſign and hath once won the Heart of her, then followes mercy upon mercy, and promiſe upon promiſe to the end of the *Chapter*; where he declares that he will betroath her unto himſelf for

ever in Faithfulneſs, and that there ſhall be no thing but inviolable kindneſs betwixt them in al time coming. The Lords Threatnings, Frown and Chaſtening Rods, are all neceſſary Mercies advancing the great Mercy of God's People in th nearer Injoyment of himſelf: And that which i its own nature, and at ſometime is mercy, at a nother time to ſuch a perſon were no mercy, or cruel Mercy, ſuch as are the tender Mercies of th wicked. But God will not ſhew wicked men Mercies, cruel Mercies to his People. I com pare the mercy of God to his People, in all hi wayes, to a white threed in a Web, run ing through many dark colours. A child, or on that knows no better, will readily think at ever diſappearing of the white, that there is no whit there: But when they look to the inner-ſide, the find the white appearing there that was interrupte and loſt, as they thought on the other ſide. Ever ſo the mercy of the Lord, which indureth fo ever to his People, runneth uninteruptedly alongſ all his diſpenſations to them; and if they point a any black part of the web, and ask, where i your white threed now? if they pitch upon an ſad diſpenſation of Providence, and ask, what mer cy is here? I will bid them, look to the inner-ſide for we muſt *not judge by appearance, but we muſ judge righteous Judgment.* There is a diſappearing white threed of mercy on the innerſide of all th blackeſt and moſt afflicting lots of Saints, and i any have not the faith to believe this in an hou and power of darkneſs, yet I ſhall wiſh them th

patience to wait, till they ſee the white threed kyth again in its own place, and till they find undenyable mercy, that will not ſuffer it ſelf to be miſtaken, tryſt them upon the borders of that dark valley: for *mercy follows them all the days of their life Pſal.* 23. 6. and ſometimes *it will compaſs them round about Pſal.* 32, 10. In a word all the very outfallings that are betwixt God and his People, they are *amantium iræ* that is but *amoris redintegratio*, lovers caſt out and agree again, and they caſt not out but that they may agree again: and ſo are God and his People, mercy ſhall conclude all that paſſes betwixt them: and that mercy is joyned with truth: for God hath ſaid it, and he was never yet worſe than his word to any; but to many very oft much better. You ſee here (which confirms the point not a little) what a wilde piece ſhe is, to whom the Lord does all this, neither minding God nor his Covenant nor Commandments; but courting her lovers and following her lightneſs: and yet the Lord purſues her, light and litle worth as ſhe is, courts her, and invites her to come home. All this is ſtrange, and yet all this is but like God, that the *Holy One of Iſrael* ſhould thus like the *Adullamite* Judah's *friend Gen.* 38. go to ſeek a Harlot by the way ſide.

But conſider. 1. That when the Lord Married her, he knew all the faults that followed her, and took her with them all. If God had not known before what ſhe would prove, it might be ſtrange that thus he ſuits her: but if there be any thing to be admired here, it is his firſt love to her whom

he knew to be ſuch an one. But 2*dly* conſider where will the Lord do better? Where is there any in the World that without his own undertaking would ſerve him otherwayes? And therefore till the Lord find a better match, he thinks (and with all reaſon) even as good hold him at his firſt choiſe: Eſpecially ſince 3. He knows of a way how to gain her: And 4. ſees her already rewing her courſes, and ſaying that ſhe will return to her firſt husband. And by all this 5. he will let it be ſeen that he is not ſo unſtable and light as ſhe is. She could find in her heart to entertain others in his place, and ſurely ſhe was not ill to pleaſe, that could take an Idol in his roome: but yet he will make it manifeſt to all the World, that *he is God and changes not*; and therefore he will mantain his old kindneſs to her, and will remember the love of her eſpouſals, and the kindneſs of her youth: For 6. Fooliſh as ſhe was, he had gotten more love of her in former times, than he had gotten of all the World beſides. And thus the very caſe ſtands betwixt God and his deboarding Children and backſliding People unto this day.

III The *third* great Scripture truth that is here ſolemnly confirmed is this, That *Gods way with his People is not the manner of men.* 2 Sam. 7, 19. Hoſea 6, 7. *They like men tranſgreſs the Covenant.* *and* Chap. 11. 9. *He* like God and like himſelf (and there is none like unto him: for if any were like him, he were not himſelf) *will not execut the fierceneſs of his anger, nor return to deſtroy them; becauſe he is God and not man,* Jer. 3, 1. *They*

ſay

say if a man put away his wife, and she go from him and become another man's, Shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the Harlot with many lovers, yet return again unto me saith the Lord. Now that Gods way with his People, is not the manner of men, warrands them to expect from him things not ordinary: for it was the greatness of his extraordinary kindness to *David* that made him say so of God: yea it warrands them to expect above expectation. *Isai.* 64. 3. *Thou didst terrible things that we looked not for.* Yea more, it even warrands them to expect above admiration. *Zech.* 8. 6. *If it be marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this People in these dayes; should it also be marvelous in my eyes, saith the Lord of Hosts?* And the Ground of all is *Isai.* 55, 9. *Because as the Heavens are higher than the earth, so are the Lords ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts.* This is solemnly confirmed in the Text proposed: where we have such a stupendious strange inference, a *Therefore* that (considering what hath been last laid) all the World cannot tell *Wherefore*: a *Therefore*, that if it had been left to all the World to supply what follows it, considering what hath immediatly gone before, I doubt it could have entered into any created heart to have once guessed it. *She went after her lovers and forgot me saith the Lord*, and *therefore I will allure her and comfort her.* To this *Therefore* is well subjoined, *Behold*, which observation teacheth Admiration of what we cannot reach to satisfaction: Only, from all this, let us consider, whether

the great ſin of limiting God be not too ordinary, and too litle abhorred an evil amongſt us. We frame to our fancy a litle modeſt God forſooth that muſt not take too much upon him: and by thoſe fancies we model our Prayers, and returnes, and pardons of ſin, and accounts of Providences, and events of diſpenſations, and all things. And if that be not to have another God before the true God, I have not read my Bible right, nor do I underſtand the firſt Commandment. But now after that I have wandered ſo long before, though, I hope, not beſide the purpoſe, I am yet but entering the *Wilderneſs*.

SER-

SERMON

Hosea 2: 14:

Therefore behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the Wilderness, and speak Comfortably unto her:

A *Wilderness* is a *land of darkness Jer.* 2, 31. and whilst I but look into the Wilderness, I am surrounded with the darkness of a mysterious transition in the particle *Therefore.* But when I begin to enter, and while my foot standeth even upon the borders of darkness, I see a light shining out of darkness, *Psal.* 119. 130. *the enterance of thy words giveth light, it giveth understanding unto the simple.* This lights me over the border. where being come, I hear a voice which bids me *Behold*, and beholding I see a strange *Wherefore*, of this strange *Therefore*, and it is this, that by any means the Lord must have his Peopl's heart, and be sole owner of their love without a Rival or partaker.

In the close of the former *verse*, *she forgot me* saith the Lord: that *I* cannot suffer, and therefore *will allure her, Behold I will allure her.* She forgot me and could not tell wherefor, except it was for my indulgence, and that *I* spilt her with too much kindness; as it is written *for my love they are my enemies.* And I will pursue her love, and follow her for her heart. I will allure her, and I will tell her wherefore not: *Not for your sakes do I this saith the Lord God*, be it known *unto you*; *Be ashamed and be confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.* Ezek. 36, 32. But I will not tell her wherefore; but so it must be: therefore I will allure her, and if my former kindness and indulgence was a fault; (for *the Prosperity of fools destroyes them*, Prov. 1. 32.) that shall be mended: *I will bring her into the Wilderness*; For she is so wild that I must tyne her before I win her: *I* must kill her, before *I* make her alive: I must loose her, before *I* find her: *I* must cast her down before I comfort her; And *therefore I will bring her into the Wilderness*; *and I will speak comfortably unto her.* All this we are willed to *Behold.* Therefore *Behold*, &c.

In the words then we have these four things distinctly to be considered. 1. The Note of observation *Behold.* 2, The intimation of the Churches condition, *I will bring her into the Wilderness.* 3. The Lords great design upon his Church in this and all his Dispensations to her, I *will allure her*, which rules all the vicissitudes of her divers Lots, as means depending in a due Subordination

dination upon this high end, whereinto they are all to be resolved, as into the last cause and reason. This great design of God upon his People, is as the Principles and fundamental propositions of Sciences, which prove all particular conclusions, whilst themselves only remain unproven by inference, as being received by evidence, of all that are but acquaint with the terms. For if it be asked, wherefore God will afflict his Church and bring her into the Wilderness? The answer is, because he will allure her: And wherefore will he comfort her? Because he will allure her; He must have her heart as I said before. But if it be asked, and wherefore will he allure her? What sees he in her, That thus he should Court her for her Kindness? That must answer it self, that is the *therefore* that hath no *wherefore*, but, *Even so Lord, for so it pleases thee*! 4. *I* shall consider the juncture and coincidency of her Afflictions and his Consolations; *I will bring her into the Wilderness and speak comfortably unto her.*

Therefore behold.

FRom the first thing then, the Note of Observation we have this Doctrine, That *it is our Duty (and a weighty one) well to consider the Lords wayes with his People and his Works towards them. Therefore behold.* &c. When God bids us behold, it is sure we shall have something worthy of the seeing. Now that this is a concerning Duty, seriously to observe the Lords works and wayes towards

wards his People, is confirmed By these three things from the Scripture. The 1. is, Scripture *Commands* to this purpose, such as the many *Beholds* that the Lord either prefixes or annexes to his works, whereof we have one in this place; and *Psal.* 37. 37. We are commanded to *mark and behold the end both of the upright and of the transgressours.* And to the head of commands (because I love not to multiply things without great necessity.) I refer all these things that are proper pertinents and pendicles of a command. 1. *Exhortations*, such as *Jer.* 2. 31. O *generation see ye the word of the Lord.* 2. *complaints and expostulations* such as Isai 26. 11. *Lord when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see.* 3. *Promises*, such as Hosea. 6. 3. *Then shall ye know, if ye follow on to know the Lord* &c. 4. *Threatnings*, such as Psal. 28. 5. *because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands he shall destroy them and not build them up*; with Psal. 50. 22. *Consider this ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver.* 5. *Commendations*, such as Psal. 107, 43. *whoso is wise and will observe these things* &c, *Hosea* 14. 9. And he that was a wise man and a great observer tells us *Eccles.* 2, 14, that *the wise mans eyes are in his head.* 6. We have also *Discommendations* and *Exprobrations* wherewith the Lord upbraids such as observe not his works and ways *Isai* 42. 18. *they are deaf and blind that will not see*: yea *Jeremy* 4, 22. calls them *Sottish*, and the *Psalmists* call them *Bruits Psal* 92, 6. So then by the command of God which is the undoubted determiner of Duty it is a necessary concerning

cerning duty to obſerve the Lords works and ways towards his People.

The 2d. thing that confirmes the point, is this, That the Works of God are wrought before his People for that very end, that they may obſerve them: and he makes his ways known to men, that all men may obſerve him: take but one pregnant place for this. *Iſai* 41, 20. *That they may ſee and know and conſider and underſtand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy one of Iſrael hath created it. The Holy one of Iſrael* is no Hypocrite, and yet he doth all his works to be ſeen of men.

The *third* thing that confirmes the point is, the uſefulneſs of the works of God: There is never a work of God, but it hath ſome excellent inſtruction to men that will obſerve them: every work hath a word in its mouth. There is ſomething of uſe in every one: God ſpeaks no idle words: every word of God is pure, yea his words are like Silver tryed in the furnace ſeven times: there is no droſs nor refuſe in the Bible: the *light of Iſrael* and *his Holy One* works no unfruitful works, like the works of darkneſs: Gods works of Providence are an inlargement and continuation of his firſt piece of Creation; and if the firſt edition of his works was all very good, perfect and unreproveable; how excellent to all admiration muſt the laſt edition be, after ſo many? But who is wiſe to underſtand these things, and prudent to know them? who hath theſe two uſeful volumes of the word and works of God bound in one, and ſo makes joynt uſe of them in their day-

ly reading? But howbeit many are unlearned, and to many the book be sealed, yet there are rare things in the book. So then since the works of God are so useful, it concerns us to observe them as things tending, even as also they are intended, to our great advantage. And upon this very useful consideration, we will find our selves obliged to observe seriously the Lords works and ways to his People; except we can answer that question, *wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it.Prov.* 17, 16. *I* shall not here mention that which is, if not a strange confirmation, yet a clear illustrarion of the Doctrine; and it is the practice of Saints in Scripture who have been diligent students of all the works of God universally, and particularly of his ways to his People: and some have been such proficients by their observations, that they have been able to leave us a perfect Chronicle, with a diurnal account of events in their time, as the Scripture-Historians; others have searched so deep, by the special assistance of him that searcheth all things, even the deep things of God, that they have been able to frame us certain and everlasting Almanacks of the state of future times; as the Prophets. But to pass these, as being acted and assisted by an extraordinary motion and measure of the Spirit of God, Look we thorow all the Scriptures, how Religious observers of the works of God and his ways whether in general to his People, or to themselves in particular, we find even ordinary Saints and extraordinary persons in their ordinary conversation to have been.

Now

Now being convinced that it is our concerning Duty to observe diligently the works of God, and his Dispensations to his People: Two great Questions require to be answered for our further satisfaction, and better instruction in this Duty. 1, *What are we specially to observe in the works of God and his Dispensations to his People?* 2. *How are we to observe the works of God?*

To the first Question then, be it presupposed, 1. That there is no work of God, nor any thing in any work of God, how common and ordinary soever, that is not *excellent and Glorious, and worthy to be searched out*, *Psal.* 111. 2, 3, 4. But 2. Of all the works of God, some are more Glorious and observable than others, and of every work of God, some things are more excellent and search-worthy than others. 3. That we are not able to observe or take up fully any work of God; far less all his works. *Eccles.* 8, 17. Whereupon it follows in all reason 4. that we are to apply our selves to the observation of some things especially in the works of God. Otherwise as by a perpetual endless divisibility, of the least continuous body (according to the principles of *Peripatetick* Philosophy) a midges wing may be extended to a quantity able to cover the outmost Heavens: so the observation of the meanest work of God, may abundantly furnish discourse deducable to perpetuity. But then what shall come of short-breathed man, whose days are an hand breadth, in the attempt of an impossibility? he must ly by the gate, and leave the rest (as *Italians* do their chess

chefs playes) to be told by his posterity. Wherefore *I* shall but hint compendiously at these four things chiefly, to be observed seriously in the works of God, and his ways towards his People.

1. We would consider and observe seriously the works themselves with all their circumstances, and this is a part to know the times, to know what the Lord is doing to his people in the times: *none would be such strangers in Jerusalem as not to know the things that happen there in their days.* Luke 24, 18. David Psal. 143, 5. *can say, I meditat on all thy works, I muse on the work of thy hands.* We might think him a bad Mariner who being at sea should not be able at any time to tell from what airth the wind did blow; and we may think him a litle better Christian who can give no account of the times, nor of the Works of God in the times; and knows not, it may be cares not, how the wind blows upon the Church and People of God. Every one that would be worthy of their roome in the time, would study to be acquainted with the accidents of divine Dispensations in the time; not out of *Athenian curiosity*, but *Christian inquiry*; But if it be asked, how far is it betwixt *Antioch* and *Athens*? or plainly what difference is there betwixt Christian inquiry and *Athenian* curiosity? it may not be amiss (as *Paul in passing by beheld their devotion Act.* 17. 23.) by the way to take notice out of *Act*, 17. 19. 20. 21. of these three properties of *Athenian* curiosity, which difference is from Christian inquiry,

1. It runs all upon new things; Even the Ancient

cient truths of the Gospel, and the best things in Gods dispensations, if once they become old and ordinary, do not relish with curiosity. 2. Curiosity satisfies it self with telling and hearing of those new things; it hears to tell, and tells what it hears, and tells that it may tell, and nothing els, as the *Text* says; it is taken up with the report of things more than with the things; it is an empty airy thing. 3. It is a time spending thing: they spend their time so, sayes the *Text:* Curiosity like nigards can spend well upon another mans purse, and give liberally of that which is none of its own: let no man trust his time to Curiosity, which will be sure to give him a short account of *All spent.* But for further satisfaction in the difference betwixt *Athenian* curiosity and Christian *Inquiry*, let all that be considered which rests to be answered to both the Questions proponed before, upon a particular survey whereof, we shall be able to give a more distinct judgment in the case of this difference. Only as it is kindness not curiosity that makes men inquire, how their friends do: so where there is true kindness to the People of God, it will kyth in a solicitous inquiry concerning their state in all things. But, as the man asked Christ, *who then is my neighbour?* so may the Church and People of God justly ask, But who is my friend? she sees so many as the *Levite*, pass by on the other side, who never turn aside, so much as once to ask how she does, and to whom all is as nothing that she suffers. *Lament.* 1. 12, *Is it nothing to you all ye that pass*

pass by? &c, Let it be remembred then, that the works of God themselves with all their circumstances be duely considered.

The 2*d* thing to be observed in the works of God, is, the Author and hand that worketh these works. This the Saints have observed in the works of God, *Psal.* 39, 9. this they will that others may observe, *Psal.* 109 27. This all may, and ought, and shall in the end see *Psal.* 9, 16. *Isai* 26. 11. who ever be the *Amanuensis* or what ever be the instrument, Gods works, as *Pauls* Epistles, are all given under his own hand, with this inscription, *all these have my hands done.* The Scripture hath diverse expressions to this purpose, of the finger of God, the hand of God, the arme of the Lord, and God himself appearing in his works, intimating the gradual difference of manifestations of a Providence, appearing sometimes more darkly, sometimes more clearly in the works and dispensations of God. And yet even the smallest character of providence, if men had on their Spectacles, is sufficiently conspicuous and may be discerned that it is the hand writing of the Lord, for that it hath a peculiar stampt of Divinity that cannot be counterfited. If God creat but a louse in *Egypt*, that is an original whereof the greatest Magicians can give no copy: because *it is the finger of God. Exod.* 8. 19. And yet many read the Epistle without the inscription; many see the hand work, and not the hand; the Work, and not the Worker. Not to speak of Heathen Atheists, of whom some have been darkned with the fancy of a voluble blind *Fortune*:

others

others dammished with the impression of on inflexible inexorable fate: both equally opposed to the truth of a wisely contrived and freely exercised Providence. Nor to speak of heretical *Manicheans* who attributed all evil events of sin or pain, to the Dæmoniacal influence of a *malum principium* an Independent unprincipiated Principle of evil, in plain speech, a *Devil*-God: nor of malicious blasphemous *Jews*, who, albeit that they could not deny, that notable Works and Miracles were wrought by Christ, yet calumniously attributed that, which was the finger of God, to *Beelzebub* the Prince of *Devils*. I say, not to mention these, how many are there in all Generations, who have dogmatically received the true principles of a general Providence, that, either of neglect, do not, or of infirmity and mistake cannot, or of malice will not see, the hand of God in particular events: And therefore we have this frequent Conclusion of Gods dispensations whether of mercy or Judgment, *then shall they know that I am the Lord.* Unbelief of a providence looseth all the pins and shaketh the whole frame of Religion: and the faith and actual observation of a Providence fixeth all that Atheisme looseth. Upon this pin of an observed Providence, the Saints do hang many excellent vessels of greater and smaller quantity. And what doth not *David* build upon this foundation? *the Lord reigneth.* Let us then observe Providence ruling in all dispensations, and in every one of these, let us with old *Eli*, both see, and say, *it is the Lord*: and whether dispensations

be prosperous or cross, let us remember him that hath said, *I make peace, and I creat evil.* Only let not the observation of providence either 1. slaken our hands in any good Duty: *This evil is of the Lord, wherefore then should I wait any longer for him*, was an ill use of Providence. And this is but like the rest of *Satans* and Unbelev's Conclusions. Nor 2. Let it strengthen our hands in any sinful project or practice. It was the *Devil* that said *cast thy self down from the pinacle because he hath given his Angels charge of thee.* Let us not take Providence 3. for approbation of our practice: as *Senacherib* who could say that *he was not come up without the Lord against Jerusalem.* It was a wicked word in *David*'s enemies to say, *God hath forsaken him, let us persecute and destroy him*: But *David* was of another spirit, when God delivered *Saul* into his hand: *let not my hand* (saith he) *be upon him*: for wickedness proceedeth from the wicked, as saith the Proverb of the Ancients. 4. Let no dispensations of Providence be determining evidences of our state before God: for all things fall alike unto all, and *and no man can know either love or hatred by all that is before him*, Eccles. 9, 1. It is a great vanity in a wicked man to think the better of himself for prosperity. And it a great weakness in a Saint, to think the worse of himself for Affliction and adversity, albeit all these come from the hand of the Lord. And yet none are hereupon allowed to be Stoically or stupidly unconcerned in the vicissitudes of differing dispensations: for *Eccles.* 3, 4. *there is a time to weep and a time to laugh,*

a time to mourn and a time to dance. And *chap.* 7. 14. the wise God by the wise mans mouth bids us, *in the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider.*

The 3*d.* thing to be observed in the works of God and his ways to his People, is the Properties and Attributes of those his works: for as *omne factum refert suum factorem*, every thing made resembles its maker; so in the works of God generally, and more specially in his ways and dispensations to his own, we have a lively draught and delineation of all the attributes of the blessed Worker. Here is displayed the soveraignity of God which is exalted equally above limited Royality and licentious Tyranny: for *the Kings strength loveth judgment*, Psal. 99. 4. The Soveraignity of God flows from his unlimited *I*ndendent nature, is founded upon his transcendent underived right in his creatures, and runs in this method, 1. he is over and before all things: 2. all things are of him: 3. all things are his: and therefore. 4. he may do with his own what he will: *he is the only potentat*, and *to him belongs the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever, Amen.* This Soveraignity of the works of God, or of God in his works, is a common pass-key that will open all the *Adyta*, the secret passages of the most mysterious reserved works of God, in his most surprizing dispensations to his People, and gives the only answer to Questions about many of his dispensations otherways unanswerable: instance these few. 1. Question. Why hath the *L*ord elected one to

Salvation, and appointed another to Damnation, and that, it may be, of two Brethren, as *Jacob* and *Esau* Twins born, where all things are equal in the Object? Answer. Because "the Pot-"ter hath power over the clay, to make of the "same lump one vessel to honour and another to "dishonour. *Rom.* 9. 21. Question 2: Why, in pursuance of the design and accomplishment of the work of our Salvation, did the Lord bruise his own Son and put him to grief? *It pleased the Lord Isai* 53. 10. Question 3. Why doth the Lord shew mercy to one, and harden another? Answer, *So he will Rom*, 9. 18. Question 4. Why to all those that are really in a state of Grace, doth the Lord dispense Grace so differently in time, measure, method, manner and other circumstances? Answer, *that is as the spirit of God will* 1 *Cor.* 12, 11. Question 5. Why doth the Lord distribute an equal reward of Glory to those whose works and service is very unequal in the World? Answer. Because *it is lawful for the Lord to do what he will with his own. Math.* 20. 15. Question 6. Why doth the Lord vouchafe Grace to those most ordinarily who naturally ly at the greatest disadvantages, so that the Poor, the Fools, Babes, yea the most desperat forlorn sinners, Publicans and Harlots, are called and do receive the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven and enter thereinto, whilst the Wise, the Mighty, the Righteous, Civil, Well Natured and Well bred Pharisees are passed by? Why should all this be? Answer. *Even so father for so it seemed good in thy sight. Math.* 11. 26, Question, 7, Why

7. Why doth the Lord choose one People, and Nation to make them his People, bring them within the bond of his Covenant, and give them a free dispensation of his ordinances, whilst he doth not so to others, and loves them that are of themselves, it may be, the least lovely? Answer "The Lord "loves and chooses, because he loves and chooses *Deut.* 7. compare the 7, and 8. *verses.* Question 8. how comes it that the Lord surprises his Saints many times with such unexpected kindness and mercies, as distress their wits and dash their modesty so, that they are equally ashamed and ignorant of that kindness, wherewith they are so loaded and weighted without wearying, that they are utterly at a loss to express, let be to requite it? whence is all this, *I* say? Answer. Because "Gods "way with his People, is not the manner of man: "And what can *David* say more to it? 2 *Samuel* 7, 19, 20. Question 9, But how is it that the Lord withdrawes his comfortable presence many times from his People, when they are most earnest to keep him, and solicitous to entertain him? Answer. *That is as he pleases, Cant.* 2, 7. It becomes us well to wait his Dyets, and it as well becomes him to be Master of his own Dyets. *Question* 10. Why is it that the *Lord* gives many of his finest and most Holy Saints, such a sad inward life of desertions, Fears, Tentations, that are able to distract even a wise *Heman* from his youth? and to make them *Liferenters* also of such Exercises? Answer, I find this Question made by *Heman Psal.* 88, 14. but I find no answer to it. And it may be, the *Lord*

would have said it is ill speired. The just answer to this and such like Questions is, *Job.* 33. 13. *God gives not account of any of his matters.* Question 11. In dispensations how is it that either all things fall alike to all; or if there be any odds of Lots, the worst falls to the Saints in this life? And that sometimes men that are singulary Holy are strangely afflicted? as *Job.* Answer. *Job* 9, 22, 23. "This is "one thing, therefore, *I* said it: he destroyeth the "perfect and the wicked, if the scourge slay sud-"dainly, he will laugh at the tryal of the innocent. O Soveraignity becoming him only who doth in Heaven and Earth whatsoever he pleaseth! The next property and attribute of God observable in his works, is wisdom: and this sweetly influences the former: for albeit God always will not, yet always he well can, give a good account of his matters: "known unto God are all his works, from "the beginning, *Act* 15. 18. Yea the *Lord* sometimes manifests the wisdom of his works evidently and eminently, to his Peoples admiration rather than satisfaction, and lets them see more wisdom in his dispensations than they can fathom: *O the depth!* *Rom.* 11. 33. *I* dare not cast my self into the depth of this wisdom of God in his dispensations, lest *I* be not able in haste to recover my self. Only let us mind that what we know not now of God's mind in his dispensations, it may be we shall know afterwards to our great satisfaction. We should likewise observe in the works of God, Power, Holiness, Justice, Goodness (whereof more in the sequel of our discourse) and particu-

larly

larly we would observe the Truth, for which the *Psalmist* so much commends the judgements and and works of God: we should observe, how every work of God verifies some word of his book, and how all fulfills the whole. We find it frequent in the mouth of Christ and his *Apostles*, and sure it was first in their eyes: "thus and "thus it was done that the Scriptures "might be fulfilled. The works of God are an enlarged Commentary of a daily new edition upon the Word of God. And be sure, this shall not be an *Orleans gloss* that will overturn the Text; nor will the only wise God so far forget himself, in the least to counter-work his Word. And if thus we observe the correspondency of Gods Works with his Word, our Song shall be: "as we have heard, so have we seen in the "City of our God. And that according to his name so is his praise to all the ends of the earth. *Psal.* 48. 8, 10. Only let us be sure to have the Word on our side, if ever we would expect good of the Works of God: for if Gods word be for us, himself is on our side; & *if God be for us, who shall be against us?* who is the man, what is the thing? *neither death nor life* &c.

See the fulfilling of the Scriptures.

The Fourth thing to be observed in the works of God is the voice of them. Gods words have a hand, and are active working words: his Works have a tongue, and are speaking works: his words may be seen. *Jer.* 2. 13. "O generation see ye "the word of the *Lord*. and his works may be heard, *Mica.* 6. 9. "the *Lords* voice cryeth to "the City, and the man of wisdom shall see the thy

"name, hear ye the rod and him that hath appoint-
"ed it. There is both a visible Voice and name, and an audible Rod. Men have no ears for Gods Word: or if they hear it, they dally with it, and make it but what they please, darkening it with the dust of their Carnal self-pleasing glosses: but God hath another Voice, the heavy voice of a bloody lashing rod: that Voice will cause men hear, and it speaks so distinctly that it will make the meaning of a despised Word so plain, that it shall be even visible what God would say to such hearers. As the *Apostle* sayes. 1 *Cor*, 24, 10. there are so many kinds of voices in the World, and every voice hath its own signification: So the several works of God have their several signifying voices to the Sons of Men. Some Works of God have a Voice of *Instruction*: some have a voice of Lamentation: *Jesus* once weept over the City *Jerusalem* with the *proper voice* of his Body: *Jesus* often weeps over Cities, Churches, Provinces and Kingdoms with the *Metaphoricall voice* of his Dispensations: some works of God have a voice of gladness and singing *Psal.* 92. 4. *thou Lord hast made me glad through they work*: Some have a voice of Victory and Triumph and dividing the spoile; "*I* will triumph in the works "of thy hands *ibidem*, in that same verse: *Miriam* sang *Exod.* 15, 1. *the Lord hath triumphed Gloriously*; and *Psal.* 47. "the Lord is gone up with "a shout, the Lord with the sound of a Trumpet: "Sing praises to God, sing praises, sing praises "to our God, sing praises. Some Works of God have the voice of a Lyon roaring, some of a thunder

der cracking, some of waters rushing: some Works of God have a still whispering voice, some have a clear speaking voice, some have a loud crying voice. The still voice whispers in the Conscience, the plain clear voice speaks in the Word, and the loud voice cryes in the rod: *the Lords voice cryes to the City, hear ye the rod and who hath appointed it.* Now they hear and observe the voice of God's Works that make the true use of every dispensation that it requires, that lament when the Lord Mournes, that dance when he Pipes, that tremble when he Roares, that hearken when he teaches, that answer when he calls: and thus every Godly Soul is an *Eccho* to the voice of God: "The spirit "says come, and the Bride says come: The Lord "says return, and the sinner says, behod we come: "He says, seek ye my face, and the Soul says, thy "face will *I* seek O Lord. But as Christ says, it "is only he that hath an ear who will hear, and (as the Prophet *Micah* says) "it is only the man "of wisdom that will see Gods name and hear the Rod. And I take him to have a bad ear, and little skill in discerning voices, that cannot give the Tune of God's present dispensations to his People in these Nations. But it will appertain to the answer of the next question, to give the particular notes of this tune, and to hold forth the proper uses of present dispensations to the Church and Saints of God.

The 2*d* Question proponed was, how are we to observe the Works and dispensations of God? To the question I answer, that we are to observe the

the dispensations of God, 1. with selfdenyal and humble diffidence of our own wisdom and understanding. There is 1. so much of mystery in the dispensations of God. *Verily thou art a god that hidest thy self O God the Saviour of Israel*, Isai 42, 15. And 2*dly* So many even good observers, Godly men, have verily mistaken so far in their apprehensions of Divine dispensations, (Witness Job and his freinds *who darkned counsel by words without knowledge?* Job 38. 2. and 42, 3. whereupon the Lord poses Job in the former place, and which he freely confesses in the latter) That it is needful in this point, if in any, to hearken to instruction *Prov.* 3, 5, 7. *lean not to thine own understanding: be not wise in thine own eyes.* Humble *David* though wise, *David*, who for his discerning *was as an Angel of God* 2 *Sam.* 14. 17. *would not exercise himself in matter too high for him*, *Psal.* 131 1. whereof the dispensations of God are a high part, which he acknowledges to be too hard for him to understand *Psal.* 73. 16. And his Son *Solomon* whose wisdom is so renowned, taxes all rash and unadvised inquiry into the works of God *Eccles.* 7, 10. There is no safe nor true discovery of the Works of God but through the prospect of his Word *Psal* 73. 17. *We must go to the sanctuary* with Gods Works, the Word will let us see, that *wicked men are set upon slippery places*, even when they seem to stand surest, *Psal.* 73. 18. And when their roots are wrapped about the earth, and they see the place of Stones, while they lean upon their House and hold it fast, "While they are in their greenness, they

"are

"are cut down, and as the rush they wither befor "any other herb. *Job.* 8. 11. and foreward. Ye whilst the Saints look not upon their own stat and Gods dispensations to them, according to the Word, they are ready to mistake right far. "I said "in my prosperity, my mountain stands strong and "I shall never be moved: thou didst hide thy "face and *I* was troubled. And upon the other hand, "when *I* said, my foot slippeth, Thy mer-"cy, Lord, it held me up: Wherefore let us ay be ready to hearken to better information, in our apprehensions of Divine dispensations and particular events, remembring that *all men are lyars.* But for the general issue of things, we may be well assured without all fear of mistake, *That it shall be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked*: for this is the sure word of Prophesie *Isai* 3. 10. 11. Yea not only shall it be well with the Righteous in the end, but *every thing* how cross soever in the way shall conduce and *concurr to work his wellfare*: And this is a truth that shall never fail, and wherein there is no fear of mistake, *Rom.* 8. 28. And the Scripture abounds with Noble instances of this truth. But by the contrary, all things how prosperous soever that fall to the wicked in his way, shall in the end redound to his woe, and turn to his greater misery: of this likewise there are in Scripture instances not a few. Learn we then to observe dispensations of particular events with humility and submission to a better Judgment.

2*dly* We must observe the works of God with Patience, *if we would know the Lords going forth we must*

must follow on to know Hosea 6. 3. In our observation of dispensations we must not conclude at a view nor upon their first appearance. There is 1, so much of surprisal in many dispensations, that often they escape our first thoughts: verily, says *Jacob*, "God was in this place, and *I* knew it not *Genes.* 28, 16. "when the Lord brought back the "captivity of *Zion*, sayes the Church, we were "as men that dreame *Psal.* 116, 1, When the An-"gel delivered *Peter*, he wist not whether that it "was true that was done; but thought he saw "a vision *Act.* 12, 9. There is 2, oft times much Error in our first thoughts of things that needs to be corrected by second thoughts δευτεραι φρονιδες σοφωτεραι, second thoughts are the wiser. *I say* (ays *David*) *I am cut off from mine eyes*; but I said it over soon, *I said it in my haste*, I took no leasure throughly to consider the matter: And *therefore I will look again toward thy Holy temple*, I looked, but I must look again; I said, but I must say again. The Scriptures gives many instances, of the Saints mistaks and errors in the first thoughts of Gods dispensations: and in these *patuntur aliquid humani*, they are but like men. Somtimes again 3, the Lord goes thorow in his dispensations by a method of contraries: he brings his People into the dark, before he cause light shine out of darkness; he brings them (as the Text says) *into the* driery *Wilderness, and there he comforts them*; he wounds before he heal; he kills before he make alive; he casts down before he raise up: And therefore there is need of Patience to observe the whole course of dis-

dispensations and their connexion: for if we look upon them by parts, we will readily mistake in our Observation. I find likwise 4. In many Dispensations a reserve, the Lord keeping up his mind, as it were to bait and allure his People to observe: *Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself O God the Saviour of Israel, Isai* 45. 14. O Lord we cannot see what thou wouldst be at: what I do thou knowest not now (sayes Christ) but thou shalt know afterwards. Like a man if he see his hearers slack their attention to a serious discourse, he breaks off and pauses a little, to reduce them to a serious attention: so does God in his works to gain us to a diligent Observation. Threfore in our Observation of Dispensations, we would be like *Abraham's* Godly servant *Genes.* 24, 21. *he held his peace, to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not.* Moreover 5. in some Dispensations the Lord uses a Holy simulation, and makes as if he would do that which he hath no mind to do. Sometimes he makes to take leave of his People before he tell his Erand, *Let me go sayes he to* Jacob, when *Jacob* was but yet beginning to know that it was he, and ere ever there was a word of the blessing, which he came to leave with *Jacob* for his encouragement in his encounter with his Brother. And Christ made as if he would have passed by his Disciples at Sea: and the like semblance he made *Luke* 24, 28. Now if we can have the patience to observe, we will sometimes see the Issue of Dispensations other than it appeared. And for patient Observation of Dispensations 1. *respice finem*

is,

a good advice, *Behold the end. Psal.* 37, 37. It is the end that we are bidden mark and behold, as I said above. We must not conclude of Dispensations neither by appearances nor parts: We must wait till we see every part do its part: for *all works together Rom.* 8. 28. And 2, *respice usque finem*, Behold or observe to the end, is an other direction necessary to the practice of the former: whoso would see the end must behold with patience to the end. *Daniel* 12, 8. enquires concerning the end of things, and he observes till the time of the end, he looks thorow all interveening times of the accomplishment of these events manifested to him; so, albeit none of us hath a prophetical Spirit to lead us thorow future times, yet the Faith and Patience of Saints teaches us to wait all our appointed time. In our patient Observation of Dispensations we must be like the Prophet *Isai* 21, 8. where he saith *I stand continually upon the watch tower in the day, and I am set in my ward whole nights. My soul waits for the Lord* sayes David. *more than the watch waits for the morning* Psal. 130, 6. I say more than they that wait for the morning, and by such patient Observation he had seen many a foul night have a fair morning: *Sorrow may be at night, but joy comes in the morning.* Psal 30, 5.

3*dly* We should observe the Lords Dispensations with Search and Secrutiny *Psal.* 77. 6. *my spirit made diligent search.* 1. We should search the Lord's affection in Dispensations, and whether they be in mercy or in wrath: "many get their will and ask-"ing in wrath *Psal.* 78. 30, 31. some are rebuked

and

"and chastened, but not in wrath nor displeasure "as *David* Prayes for himself *Psal.* 6,1. Therefore the question would be *Jer.* 14. 19. *hast thou rejected Judah? hath they soul loathed Zion?* 2*dly* We would search the Reasons and procuring causes of sad Dispens tions *Job* 10, 2. *shew me wherefore thou contendest with me?* 3*dly* We would search and inquire anent the event of Dispensations, *wilt thou not revive us again that thy People may rejoice in thee?* Psal. 85. 6. We are allowed likwise 4*thy* to search and enquire anent the continuance of Dispensations: to this purpose we read in Scripture many a *how long Lord?* In sad Dispensations likwise 5*ly* we should search for solid grounds of comfort, and for this we should remember bygone times, and remember the kindness we have tasted of in them, *Psal.* 89. 49. *Lord where are thy former loving kindnesses Psal.* 77. 10. *I will remember the years of the right hand of the most high.* But in the Observation of Dispensations our search would be, 6*y* chiefly about our Duty: our main question would be, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do. Act* 9. 6. And our great Petition with *David* must be, "lead me "O Lord in they righteousnes because of mine "enemies, make thy way straight before my face, *Psal.* 5. 8. "teach me thy way, O Lord, and *I* will "walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy "name *Psal.* 86. 11.

4. We should observe the Dispensations of God with Regard, the challenge is *Isai* 5. 12, *that they regard not the work of the Lord.* This Regard is a due judgment and estimation of the works of God with

with reverence becoming the Majesty, worth and excellency of the worker, and the works, and that leaves an impression of Piety and Religion upon the heart of the Observer: according to that pathetick exclamation *Rev*, 15, 4. "who shall not "not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify they name? "for thou art Holy: for all nations shall come and "worship before thee: for thy judgments are made "manifest. Due Observation of the works of God is a great curb to *Atheisme* and Prophanity: and *Atheisme* and Prophanity are as great enemies to due Observation of divine Dispensations. "Put men in fear O Lord that they may seek thy "name.

5*ly* We should observe the Lord Dispensations with Affection: *Lament.* 3. 51. *mine eye affecteth mine heart*: the Prophet's Observation of Dispensations made him cry, "my bowels, my bowels, my "heart is pained within me! *Jer.* 4. 19. *I* reckon him a savage person, and one that hath *viscera fera & triplex circa pectus robur*, the bowels of a tygar or bear, and that his heart is brass, oak, or stones, who is not affected with the Dispensations of our times; "who grieves not for the afflictions of "*Joseph Amos* 6.6. and who cryes not "alas for the "day, for none is like it. It is the day of *Jacob*'s trouble. *Jer.* 30. 7.

6. We should observe the Lords works with Memory: in our Observations of things present, we should reflect upon these that are past in former times. *I remember the days of old* Psal. 153. 5. And likwise we would lay up in memory our present Ob-

Observations for the time to come *Psal.* 48. 12, 13. *Mark ye well that ye may tell it to the generation following.* We have both joined together *Psal.* 78, 3, 4. *that which we have heard and known and our fathers have told us, we will not hide from their children, shewing to the generations to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderfull works that he hath done.* The *Psalmist* says *Psal.* 111. 4. *The Lord hath made his wonderful works to be remembred.* O! then let not the memory of the Lords Works go down in our days. Let us comfort our selves with what is remembred: and let us transmit the memory of the Lords Works to succeeding Generations, that they may share of the same comforts. And I believe the People of God in this time have much to do with their memory: we hear not what we were wont to hear, nor see what we were wont to see: We are now left to gather up the Fragments of former enjoyments by the hand of a Sanctified Memory. One says, O, I shall still think well of Christ! He shall be to me as the Apple tree amongst the trees of the Wood: for the day was when *I sat down under his shaddow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.* Cant. 2. 3. Another says O but I love the house of God well! And O when shall I come and appear there before God! for the day was when *I saw the Lords Glory and his power in the sanctuary.* Psal. 63, 2. And O when shall I see the like again? O how shall that be? Then make use of thy Memory, and remember that *David* from the Wilderness returned and dwelt in the house of the Lord all the days of his life. Remem-

ber likewise *Isai* 64. 3. *that God did for his People terrible things which they looked not for, he came down and the mountains flowed down at his presence*; and this they build their hope upon in their present case. Conclude thou then with *David* 2 *Sam.* 15. 25. That "if thou hast found favour in the eyes of "the Lord: he will bring thee again, and shew thee "both his Ark and his Habitation! This Scripture hath long lodged in my thoughts, and while mine own heart, like *Sarah* behind the Tent door laughs and says, shall these things be? In reproach of scornful unbelief, *I* thus both use and please to reason. Those who find favour in the eyes of the Lord he will bring them again, and shew them both his Ark and his Habitation: to wit the Sanctuary: But the many wandering Saints and out-cast Ministers and People of these Nations find favour in the eyes of the Lord: Therefore they shall be brought back to see the Ark of the Lord and his Habitation. Let unbelief answer the first proposition: Let even their enemies answer the second, and then who shall deny the Conclusion?

7. We would observe the Works of God and his Dispensations with Use: the useful Observer is the good Observer of divine Dispensations, and this is that which before, in Scripture phrase we called a harkening to the Lords Voice in his Dispensations, and a discerning of their Tune. There is no Work of God, but it hath a Voice, and it hath an Use; and the Works of God are of so universal Use, that hardly is their any truth in the Word of God, but we are taught it by some Work of God. It is

not

not pertinent, nor take I pleasure here to enlarge in general, of the proper uses of the several Works of God; But having above supposed, as the truth is, that to any who hath an ear to discern; *The voice* of present dispensations to the Church in these Nations is beyond all dispute *a mournful one.* I shall therefore shortly hint at the proper uses of such Mournful Dispensations: and *I* shall direct them all from the *third chapter* of the *Lamentations.*

The first Use of present Dispensations is, for Lamentation. *Verses* 48, 49, 51. Mine eye, mine eye, mine eye! *mine eye runneth down with Rivers of Waters. Mine eye trickleth down and ceaseth not, without any intermission: mine eye affecteth mine heart.* O Call all that are skilful to Mourn, and let them raise up a Lamentation. But though neither our Eyes weep nor our Voice Lament, yet even our Condition it self doth weep and Mourn to God. *Jer.* 12. 10, 11. *Many Pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have troden my portion under foot; they have made my pleasant portion a desolate Wilderness, they have made it desolate, and being desolate, it* Mourneth unto me, *the whole land is made desolate, and no man layeth it to heart.* Come then and lift up a Lamentation together all that are sorrowful for the Solemn Assemblies. Lament smitten shepherds, Lament scattered flocks, Lament hungry and thrifty Souls, Lament desolate Congregations, Lament poor doubting disconsolate Christians, Lament closed Churches, Lament empty Pulpits, Lament silent Sabbaths, turn your joy

into Mourning, O our blessed Communion-times: Lament Cities, Lament Burrows, Lament ye dark Villages; *and my soul shall Mourn in secret places, because the Lords flock is carryed away.* Jer. 13. 17. O say! it is a Lamentation, and shall be for a Lamentation. We never saw the like since Popish Interdictions, so many Glorious lights obscured in these Nations. And if an enemy had done this, then might we have born it; if Pope, if Turk, if Pagan: But thou O----a friend, a Protestant, a Prince of the Covenant! What thing shall I take to Witness for this?

But because the Apostle bids us *Mourn as those that have hope.* The 2d Use of present Dispensations shall be to Hope, *verse* 21. "This *I* recal to my mind "therefore have I hope. *verse* 24. in him will *I* hope. *verse* 26. "it is good that a man should both hope "and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. *Isai* 8, 17. "*I* will wait upon the *Lord* that hideth "his face from the house of *Jacob*, and *I* will look "for him. *It* is wonderful to see, how contrary conclusions Faith and Unbelief will draw from the same premisses. The *Lord* is wroth and hides his face, then say believing *Isai* and *Jeremy* "we will "hope in him and wait for him; yea but set unbelieving *Joram* to it, and he will tell you shortly "why should *I* wait any longer for him 2 *Kings* 6, 32. And if he must know why; *Jeremy* (*Lament.* 3, 26.) can tell him, *it is good:* and if he ask what good is in it? *Isai* will tell him more particularly *Chap.* 30. 18. *The Lord is a God of judgment, and blessed are all they that wait for him* Psal. 52, 9. *I will*

will wait on thy name, for it is good before thy Saints: There we see it is the judgment of all the Saints, that it is still good to wait on God. O then let us wait on him that hideth his face from the house of *Jacob*; for surely there is hope. But where is our hope? our hope is in God that saveth the upright: *he is the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof in time of trouble* Jer. 14, 8. So long as he is God, so long is their hope: and to say there were no hope, were to say there were no God, and they Rob God of his Glory and Title who fail in their hope.

The 3*d* Use of present Dispensations is Subm[illegible]sion. *verses* 27, 28, 29, 30. "It is good for a m[illegible] "that he bear the yoke in his youth: he sitteth "alone and keepeth silence: bec[illegible] he hath bo[illegible] "it upon him: he puteth his m[illegible] "if so be there may be hope, he g[illegible] "to him that smiteth him, he is [illegible] "proach, and *verse* 39. wherefore d[illegible] "man complain, a man for the punis[illegible] "his sins? What ever be the Lords Dispe[illegible] it is our part to submit. And because Sub[illegible] to Gods Dispensations is a hard duty to our Rebellious corrupt hearts, I find the lamenting Prophet tacitly insisting to perswade submission upon these grounds. 1. From the mitigation of Dispensations: the Lord punishes not as we deserve: we are living men and are not consumed, and that is his mercy renewed every morning. And indeed all that is less than Hell to a sinner, is mercy undeserved *verse* 22, 23. 2*dly* from the good that

may be expected of the saddest Dispensations. *verse* 27. "It is good that a man bear the yoke in his "youth: there is no lot so ill, but a well exercised Soul can make good of it. 3*dly* From the hope of an out-gate in the issue. *verses* 31. 32: "the Lord "will not cast off for ever, but though he cause "grief, yet will he have compassion according to "the multitude of his mercies. 4. From the Lords unwillingness to afflict. *verse* 33. "for he "doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the Children "of men. 5. From the Lords Soveraignity *verses* [illegible]38 "out of the mouth of the most high pro-[illegible]ceedeth not evil and good? 6. From mens de-[illegible]serving justly the saddest things. *verse* 39. "where-[illegible]fore doth a man complain for the punishment of [illegible]his sins? [illegible] *verses* 35. 36. the Lord approveth [illegible]ng. But true submission is not a [illegible] heartless thing: and if we suffer our [illegible]y to be idle, they will not fail, like un-[illegible] Souldiers, to mutin, and so find to [illegible]es both unhappy and unlawful Work: [illegible]re they must be diverted to that which is good.

Take we then the 4*th* Use of present Dispensations to imploy our hearts with all, and that is Self-examination. *verse* 40. *Let us search and try our ways*; a pertinent and very necessary work for such a time. Amongst the many things we get leisure now to think on, let this be minded as none of the least: as the fyning Pot for Silver and the Furnace for Gold; so is affliction to a sinner, a discovering and purging thing. Affliction (as I noted before)

before) will cause men hear on the deafest side of their head, it will open their ears to discipline, it will cause them see things that before they would not see. Let us then set in earnest to the Work of Self-examination while we have the advantage of such a help.

The *5th* Use of present Dispensations is Repentance in that same 40 *verse* and *let us turn again to the Lord*, What ever by Self-examination is discovered to be amiss, (as hardly any man shall search himself faithfully but many such things will be found with him) let all that be amended: for if our scum be only discovered and go not out from us, we shall be in hazard to be consumed in the Furnace. Repentance well becomes a sinner at any time; but especially when God with rebukes is chastising man for iniquity, and persuing sin with a Rod: And *Gods hand will still be stretched out, nor will his anger turn away, till the People turn to him that smites them*, Isai 9, 12, 13. If we would freely turn to the Lord from all iniquity, we needed neither fear the wrath of men, nor be beholden to their kindness, the Lord should then command deliverances for *Jacob*, as it is said *Psal.* 44 4. and should cause the best of them be glad to go his Erands and serve at his Commands, *But our iniquities turn away and withhold good things from us Jer.* 5. 25. O if once that sweet Word were going thorow the Land, *Hosea* 6. 1. every one sending it to his neighbour and saying, *come and let us return unto the Lord.*

The *6th* Use of present Dispensations is much Prayer, *verse* 41. *Let us lift up our heart with our*

hands to God in the Heavens, and if the People of God set once to Prayer in good earnest, it will be high time for their enemies to fear a mischief; for sure the cloud of the Saints Prayers will break in a tempest upon their fatal heads. The three last verses of the Chapter are dreadful to them. *Render unto them a recompence O Lord, according to the Work of their hands: give them sorrow of heart; thy curse unto them: persecute and destroy them in anger from under the Heavens of the Lord.* And if the destitute People of God were mighty in Prayer, wrestling with God, weeping and making supplication to the Angel as *Jacob* did, I could tell the Church of God good news, that then the *Lord* would build up Zion, and would appear in his Glory, and *that he would regard the Prayer of the destitute; and not despise their Prayer* Psal. 102 16, 17. For the Lord is even waiting his Peoples Call, *Isai* 30. 18. 19. *the Lord waiteth to be Gracious, he will be very Gracious to thee,* "at the voice of thy cry when he shall "hear it, he will answer thee. And what will he give us? *he will give us our removed Teachers* with the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel, in a plentiful and powerful Dispensation of the Word *Isai* 30. 20, 21. O then Let all that love *Jerusalem* Pray, and let us wrestle together by Prayer, and each Pray with another, and for another, and to anothers hand, and let us all join hands, and see who can give the kindest lift and go nearest to raise up the Tabernacle of *David* that is fallen, that we bear not the shame, that this breach is under our hand. Now all these uses of afflicting Dispensati-

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ons, are as pertinent to the Cases of particular Persons, whose heart knows its own grief, and who know every one the plague of their own heart. And by all the rest Prayer by the Holy Ghost is prescribed, as a chief ingredient in all the cures of an afflicted case Jam 5, 13. *Is any man afflicted let him Pray.* Prayer hath its famous witnesses in the Scriptures, of the great things that it hath done; neither wants it its witnesses in the breasts all the Saints. One word of sincere Prayer will cause *Devils*, and men, and lusts, and fears, and cares all run, and will burst the strongest bands, One word of sincere Prayer from the end of the earth, will at a call bring God to the Soul, and with him light, joy, peace, inlargment and Soul-solace. But if any be so obstinate, as the *Jews* were in the case of the Blind man, that they will not believe famous well qualified witnesses, who know what they speak, and speak that which they have seen; I say but of Prayer to them, as the blind mans Parents said to those of him *John* 9, 21, *ask him, he shall speak for himself.* Try but Prayer in earnest, and I have no fear to be found a false witness: for its own works shall praise it self best; and then I shall be thought to have spoken within bounds. And thus *I* have answered the questions proponed for instruction in the Observation of divine Dispensations: all which may serve (as I said) to state a clear difference betwixt *Athenian curiosity* and *a Christian inquiry* into the works of God and his ways towards his People.

Having already prosecuted the Doctrine in a way

way (as I hope) not unuseful, there remains the less to be said to it by way of Use distinctly, in the usual way. Only be it remembered that we observe the Lords Dispensations in manner aforesaid: and for incouragment take but one place *Psal.* 107. 42, 43. *the righteous shall see it, and rejoyce and all iniquity shall stop her mouth. Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.* And so much for the first thing in the Text, the Note of Observation *Behold.*

I will bring her into the Wilderness.

THE *second* thing in the Words is, the intimation of the Churches Condition. *I will bring her into the Wilderness.* And hence the Doctrine is, *That these to whom the Lord minds good, may expect to come to the possession of intended blessedness by the way of a Wilderness, Behold* says the Lord *I will allure her, and speak comfortably unto her*: there is my design upon her, and these are my thoughts of Good concerning her, but first *I will bring her into the Wilderness.* In the prosecution of this Doctrine, three things are to be considered. 1. What is this *Wilderness*? 2. Wherefore doth the

Lord

Lord bring his People into the *Wilderness*? 3. What use we are to make of this intimation of such a Condition?

1, First then, what is the *Wilderness*? I Answer 1. in general, it is a Figurative expression of an afflicted Condition. *I will bring her into the Wilderness*; that is, I will exercise her with such Afflictions as men are wont to meet with in a *Wilderness*. And therefore 2*dly* I find a *Wilderness Condition* importing these things particularly.

1. It importeth a Condition of Want and scarcety both of Temporal and Spiritual things *Heb.* 11. 37. "those of whom the World was not worthy "were destitute of all things: 2 *Cor.* 6 10. The "Apostles that made many Rich, were themselves "as poor: and they that possessed all things were "as having nothing. *Psal.* 107 4, 5. They that wan-"der in a Wilderness are hungry and thristy; "and their Soul fainteth in them. *David Psal.* 63. 1. says *my Soul thrisseth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land where no water is*: he had no doubt his own temporal Wants, and those great enough, but his greatest Want was of the waters of the Sanctuary, as is clear from the 2*d verse, To see thy power and thy Glory so as I have seen thee in the Sanctuary*: and the same was his Condition in the 42. and 43. *Psalmes*, And this is the supposed Condition of all the People of God. *Isai.* 41. 17. "they are poor and needy, seeking "water and there is none, and their tongue fail-"eth for thrist. The want of Water which is a most common thing, denoteth the extremity of

scarce-

carcety and want. And this is the first thing in a Wilderness-Condition. The many hungry Bellys and no fewer hungry Souls in these times which are crying, *my Leanness, my Leanness*, do plainly say, that we are entred more nor a days journey into the Wilderness.

The 2*d* thing imported in a Wilderness-Condition is Desolation and Barrenness, *Psal.* 63. 1. and *Psal.* 107, 33. *a Wilderness is a dry land, a thirsty land where no water is.* Jer. 9, 12. *It is burnt up like a Wilderness*, and likwise a Wilderness is a desolate place: there no foot of man doth come; there the Cities are made heaps; there nettles grow upon the ruines of Glorious Temples. This Desolation and Barrenness is the cause of scarcety and want in a Wilderness. And this likwise we have felt in our Wilderness; we Want, but we know not where to get it: the Wells are stopped, good Occasions for our Souls are removed, our Teachers are removed into Corners, the Songs of our Temples are become howlings. We may sing the 8 *verse* of the 46. *Psalme* with a sad note, *Come behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth*: and where Desolations end, there beginneth Barrenness and dry breasts. As in one place we have the Wells of water and the Streams from Lebanon stopped, in the next place we come to, we find Clouds without rain, and Pits without water, Trees whose fruit is withered, and without fruit, *Epistle* of *Jude* 12 *verse*, men who either never had any thing, or elss have lost what once they promised. As if Christ (O sad!) had come

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by and said, henceforth never fruit grow upon you; if we were thristy beside the water, or hungry beside Food, or sick beside the Physician, or sorrowful beside a comforter, or in darkness beside light, we might the better bear it: But that it is other ways shews we are indeed in the Wilderness.

3*dly* The Wilderness importeth a Solitary Condition of Separation from comfortable, sweet and useful Society: *David* felt this in the Wilderness *Psal.* 42. 4. "When he remembred that he had "gone to the house of God with the multitude, "with the voice of joy and praise, with the multi-"tude that kept Holy day: and for that his "Soul was poured out in him: *Heman* felt this in his Wilderness *Psal.* 88. 18. *lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness*, : The afflicted, overwhelmed Composer of the 102, *Psalm* felt this likwise in his Wilderness, 6, and 7, *verses.* "I am like a Pelican in the Wil-"derness, and like on Owl of the desart. I watch "and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top. *Isai* 35, 1. "The Wilderness is a solitary place. Good company and sweet comfortable useful Society hath this to prove it a choice mercy, that (as the rest of that nature) it is never well known nor prized by us, till we are denyed it, and deprived of it. And now (with *Pharoahs* Butler *Gen.* 41. 9.) "I remember my faults this day; and *I* fear *I* have too many fellows in the fault, who either neglect disdainfully, or els abuse good Company to the increase of vanity. Now begin I to under-

stand

ſtand more of that Text *Eccl.* 4. 9, 10, 11, 12. And what *a woe is it to him that is alone*, and yet *I* doubt not but the kindneſs of the Lord is ſhewn to many, even in ſeparating and ſcattering them one from another: And to confirm me in this judgment, *I* remember the Opinion of ſome who have been in account for skill in things of that nature: And thus they have thought, that when a Family or Bairn-time incline to a Conſumption (which being a diſeaſe hereditary runs much in a blood) in that caſe it is good that they part Company, and live at a diſtance one from another, for that the diſeaſe is ſtrengthned by their ſocial converſation. I apply, that the evil and hazard of the Company of thoſe that are tenderly beloved Children of God, may move him even in kindneſs to ſend them apart: but they will find it a kindneſs not ſo comfortable as needful. As *I* could like to be hungry beſide good meat, or weary beſide good lodging: ſo I would chooſe to be ſolitary beſide good Company, that is, ſo to enjoy my ſelf by my ſelf, as that I might likwiſe enjoy the help of Chriſtian Company at will with conveniency. And as I am ſure that God was never the inſtituter of the *Monks* order; ſo, ſure I am, none can chooſe to ſhun good Company, but ſuch as would chooſe their own affliction, and forſake their own mercy. Only I muſt here mind that good People are not always good Company: but a good Man or Woman are only then good Company, when they ſhew their goodneſs in Company, ſo that they may do good to the Company: and therefore, though it may

may seem a *Paradox*, yet it is too true; that we cannot always say we have been in good Company, when we have been in the company of Good Men. Let Good People keep fellowship and company; let the evils and vanities of good People be discharged the Company, let Good People do good in Company, and so Good People shall be Good Company. But as often as we miss good Company, let it mind us that we are in the Wilderness. And be it here added (because I love not to multiply) that it is no small part of the Saints Wilderness to be vexed and infested with evil Company. The Scripture describes a Wilderness to be the place of Owls, Ostriches, Wolves, Lyons, Serpents, Satyres, Devils, Dragons and all evil Beasts and doleful Creatures: And as it is said of Christ literally, *Mark*, 1, 13. that in the Wilderness he was with the wild Beasts, so Christians are mystically neighboured with the like in their Wilderness: their righteous Souls are vexed with hearing and seeing daily their doleful and detestable practises, besides their Persecutions whereof it follows to speak, particularly.

4. The Wilderness importeth a Wandering and unsetled Condition, *Psal.* 107. 4. "they wandered in "the Wilderness in a solitary way, they found no "City to dwell in, *Heb.* 11. 37, 38. those of whom "the World was not worthy wandered about in "deserts, and in mountains, and in Dens and Caves "of the earth. We read in the History of Scripture, how *Israel* wandered, and how many seats they changed in the Wilderness of *Egypt* fourty years. We read of the *Patriarchs Psal.* 105. 13. how

how as strangers in the land of Promise "they "went from one Nation to another, from one "Kingdome to another People. We read, in the 1 *Sam.* of *David*'s wandering from one Wilderness to another, and amongst the rocks of the wilde Goats which he resents with Tears, *Psal.* 56. 8. *Thou tellest my wanderings*, sayes he, *put thou my Tears into thy bottle, are they not in thy Book*? And this is even the wilderness-condition of the Saints and Servants of God this day in these Nations. How many driven from Station and Relations, and put to seek Lodging amongst Strangers? What strange Unsettlings are there among us? By Outing, Confinement, Banishment, denouncing Fugitive; and all these by Laws and Acts so contrived, as if they meant only to grant the Lords Servants *Jeremys* deploring wish *Jer.* 9, 2. "O "that I had in the Wilderness a lodging-place of "wayfaring men, that I might leave my People "and go from them. And all these are beside all the particular wanderings of the Lords scattered flocks whose Condition we may see *Ezek*, 34. 6, and throughout: "my sheep wandered through "all the mountains and upon every high hill, yea "my flock was scattered upon all the face of the "earth and none did search nor seek after them.

5. The Wilderness importeth a Condition of Tentations, *Matth.* 4, 1. "Christ was led into the "Wilderness to be tempted *Psal.* 95, 8. 9. *Israel's* "time in the Wilderness, is called the day of Ten-"tation. I know it is there meant Activly of these Tentations; as is clear from the 9*th verse*, *Your fa-*

thers

thers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works. But when I look back upon *Moses*, who himself was with the Church in the Wilderness, and well knew their case, I find him reckoning it a time of Passive Tentations also, such I mean wherewith they were tryed and tempted *Deut.* 8. 2. "And "thou shalt remember all the way, which the "Lord thy God led thee these fourty years in the "Wilderness to humble thee, and to prove thee, "to know what was in thine heart, whether thou "wouldst keep his Commandments or not. It is clear 1. from *Jam.* 1, 15. that *God tempteth no man.* 2. It is a great question whether *Satan* hath a hand by tentation in every sin of man. But 3*dly* I judge, that *Satan* hath not such a hand in every sin as some are ready to say and think. The *Devil* is not so ill, we say, as he is called, nor so ugly as he is painted: many men father those sins upon the *Devil*, that have their own hearts both for Father and Mother: and many sin without a Tentation *ab extra*, or from without. Yet in the 4*th* place, it is manifest from *Jam.* 1, 14. 15. that *a man is tempted* at least *by his own lust*, as often as he sins. And thus there is no sin without some kind of tentation, either from another or from the sinner himself: and where there is much sin and provocation, (as was amongst the *Israelites* in the Wilderness) there is much Tentation. Let the Lords People then expect to find their Wilderness a place of Temptation. And are not Tentations strawed thick in the way of Gods People in these times? Is there not a ne tspread upon mount *Ta-*

bor? may we not say with the *Psalmist*, *Ps* 142. 3. *in the way wherein I walked have they laid snare for me*? Is not the cass now, you must eithe do thus or thus as men (who because they have n Conscience of their own, therefore care not fo yours) shall please to command, or els do otherway upon your perill? And when things might o therways be better ordered and established, ar not Laws and Acts contrived so as occasions ma be sought against those, *against whom*, like *Dani Chap.* 6, 5. *there can be found no occasion, except i the matters of their God.* Is not this the houro temptation? *Rev.* 3. 10. But when enemies hav given over, and done their worst, in come ou friends (who as *Peter* to Christ *Matth.* 16. 23) ar a temptation to us, O, say they, look to you self, and play not the Fool. And when all thes prevail not yet, in comes Carnal, Worldly, Unbelieving, Grudging and disquieting thought from our own hearts, and these, as in a reserv guard, give the last and most dangerous assault, e specially if the force of our spirits be any whi daunted or disordered by the foresaid attempts: and therefore *James.* 1. 14. (looking over the former as it were) tells us that then *a man is tempted, when he is led away of his own lust and enticed*: and then it is high time to look to our selves, when our enemies are those of our own house. Many have born the force of outward attempts who had much ado to sustain the impetuous assaults of their own disquieted and disquieting hearts. *Psal.* 42, 5. and 43, 5. "Why art thou cast down O my soul

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"and why art thou disquieted in me? And therefore *James* pronounces him the "*blessed man Chap.* 1. 12. *that endureth tentation.* The Tentations of an afflicted lot is the great Affliction of our lot: and therefore in Scripture Afflictions are called Tentations, and they that escape the Tentations of Affliction have got above all hazard of Affliction otherwise: for Tentations being the snare of Affliction, when that is once broken, the strength of it is spent, and it's force is over.

6. The Wilderness importeth a Condition of Fears, and perplexing Doubts: for the Wilderness being a *land of darkness.* Jer. 2, 31. and a place where there is no way, it puts the traveller inevitably to many sad fears, and perplexing doubts. The afflicting fears and doubts of Saints in the Wilderness may be reduced to those three chief heads. The 1, are concerning their spiritual Condition and state before God. The 2, are concerning their present incumbent Duty and Work. The 3, are concerning thee vents of incumbent Dispensations. *I* cannot endure, nor dare *I* expatiat more largly in a discourse of these particularly, lest either I faint in the way, or once turning off but a little into those dark mysterious paths, I be not able quickly to recover the high way: for if I speak to the purpose, I may readily prognosticat that to be the fate of my discourses, which is of their case who once are ingaged in the intricacies of these perplexities, that hardly can they quickly ridd themselves. This only I must say, that those Souls that have been at their wits end in these

things, and have not known in all the World what to do, can best tell what it is, to be brought into the Wilderness. And this I observe, that even as men have got a custome to plant Wildernesses in the midst of pleasant Gardens; so many men in their otherwise good Books and Sermons, imprudently either starting difficulties unseasonably, or pursuing them excessivly, do rather creat than clear perplexities to poor Souls, and give them the entertainment of a toilsome divertisment in place of solid refreshment. But my project invites me, if I could be so happy, rather to plant a Garden in a Wilderness, than a Wilderness in a Garden. I fear there is in the World but too much artificial Religion and exercises, like Garden-Wildernesses, invented rather for pleasure than created by necessity: I fear some Christians, like some Preachers, read more off their book, nor they repeat off their heart: But I doubt the pleasure of an artificial Wilderness, will either relieve or compense the grief of a real One. Elaborat, fine, accurat Discourses of Christians Doubts and cases whatever they deserve in their own place, will be found but Physicians of no value; and miserable comforters to Souls that are in earnest; except he that reveals secrets and looseth the Prisoners lighten the doubting Soul's darkness, with a beam of his own presence: In the 42, *Psal. David* had said well to it, but that says best, 11. *verse, he is the health of my countenance, and my God.* As Gardens are more pleasant for men in health, than for sick men; so, Discourses of Christian cases, in doubts and perplexi-

ties,

ties, will readily do better, either before or after the distempter, than in the time. Much Prayer and communion with God, is the best book of cases that ever a doubting Soul read, and is blest with the maniest discoveries and manifestations of God, to those that walk in darkness and have no light.

7. The Wilderness importeth a Condition of Reproach and Persecution: *Job* 30. 5. descrives the reproachful base Condition of his Adversaries that mocked him from this, that, "they fled into the "Wilderness and were driven forth from among "men who cryed after them as after a thief. And *Rev.* 12. 6. *the woman in travel* the persecuted Church *fled into the Wilderness.* This was *Davids* Wilderness-Condition. *Psal.* 55. 3. "because of the "voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of "the wicked; for they cast iniquity upon me, and "in wrath they hate me, and in *verse* 6 & 7 "I said, O that I had wings like a dove: for then "would I flee away and be at rest. Lo then "would *I* wander far off, and be in the Wilder-"ness, Selah. The scourge and persecution of false tongues, being worse than the venome of Asps, the sting of Serpents, or Poyson of Dragons that haunt the Wilderness, makes often the Wilderness a refuge and rest to be desired by the Reproached People of God, and the wrath and cruelty of wicked men makes the Saints often times find Lyons, Bears Wolves and Dragons to be better neighbours. *Heb.* 11. 36. *Cruel mockings* is the first *Item* in the account of Saints sufferings: and then follows *Scourging, Bonds, Killing Sawing, tempt-*

ing, Torturing and wandering about. And the Apostle 2 *Timoth.* 3. 12. warns all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus, that there way lyes thorow this Wilderness of persecution, whereof reproach is not the least part: for compare *Gen.* 21, 9. with *Galat.* 4. 29, that was carnal *Ishmael's* Persecution, wherewith he persecuted his Brother *Isaac* the son of the promise. And they had tryal, says the Apostle, of *Cruel mockings*: and the slandering tongues of wicked men are compared in Scripture to the sharpest and most bitter instruments, sharp arrows, Coals of Juniper, Swords, Spears and the poyson of Serpents: Racking and Torturing may break a mans bones, But *Reproach*, says the *Psalmist*, *hath broken my heart*, and it hath dammished my very Spirits; for *I am ful of heaviness* Psal 69, 20. And now when the People of God live in "a land "of trouble and anguish, from whence come the "young and old Lyon, the viper and fiery fleeing Serpent, *Isa.* 30. 6. pray, who will not call that a Wilderness? and where are they, think you, "whose soul is among Lyons? *Psal.* 57. 4. If any shall search the records of our Scotish Inquisition (the Creature that likes not to be called the high Commission) they may be soon convinced that these are no fictions of Fanaticks and disaffected persons. But the question is not demonstrative; (for I warrand they have more Loyalty than to deny these things that they say are so good service to-----) but juridical; for *Jure factum dicunt*, they do all by *Law* forsooth, and so justify all their practises: But are all *Laws* righteous? or is there

there such a thing in the World as *a throne of iniquity which frameth mischief by a Law.* Psal. 94. 20. They think possibly (as *Paul* once thought) that they ought to do these things, and that they do good service; to God indeed they do not say, but to-----they cry. But stay till Christ examine the Bravest man amongst the Examinators, upon that little question, *Why persecutest thou me?* and then my Lord Inquisitor comes in upon second thoughts with his confession, *I was a Blasphemer, a Persecuter, and injurious.* 1 Timoth. 1, 13. And then the fools excuse is alledged by him that thought himself so wise (for *sapientis non est dicere*, Putavi) I thought that I should have done these things. But what think you now Sir? Why now I see that which formerly I called Loyalty, zeal and good service, must change its Name without any change in the Thing: for it both was, and is, no other thing but Blasphemy, Persecution and injury. Such a thing as this has been.

8. The Wilderness importeth a Melancholious, sad and dejected Condition. This follows from all the rest. Any who ever travelled alone thorow a Wilderness, may easily understand this; and there is reason for it: because a man is there deprived of any thing that may chear his Spirit, and of all gladening Objects; besides that he is possessed with fearful apprehensions of evils that may befal him: and his spirit in the very entry is amused with the uncouth and solitary nature of the place. To say no more of this: the very Countenances of of the Lords People in these times look like a Wilderness: and sad cause why; we see many things

tomake us sorry, little to make us glad. We see such things as we nor our Fathers have not seen the like, And if there were no more, and albeit for our own particular we had no occasion of grief, and though like *Nehemiah* we were serving the King with Wine, and were of as jovial an humor as he who was not wont afore time to be sad: yet if any should ask the Kings Question. *Nehemiah* 2, 2. "Why is thy countenance sad seing thou art not "sick? This is nothing els but sorrow of heart: may we not sadly reply with him in the 3d *verse* "Why should not my Countenance be sad when "my City, the place of my fathers Sepulchres ly-"eth waste, and the Gates thereof are consumed "with fire? That is, when the Church of God is laid desolate. But I suspect there are few that truly love God, or are kindly sons of *Zion*, but they have their own particular grievances inthese times, wherein they share of the common lot of the Church their Mother that sits in the dust: and it is good it be so: For *wo to them that are at ease in Zion.* Amos 6. 1. The particular grievances of Saints and their pressures, serve well to keep them mindful of the Churches common lot: for fellowship in calamity is such a pregnant incentive to sympathy, that even *Jesus* himself was made the more compassionat, for what he himself suffered *being in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin he cannot but be touched with the feeling of our infirmity* Heb. 4. 15. And does it not well suite all the Children to go in Mourning when the Mother sits desolate and afflicted as a Woman forsaken? El-

how

how could they expect to be comforted with her, if they do not Mourn for her? *Solomon* that great Master of Religion, Nature, and Reason, hath determined *Eccl.* 7. 2, 3. "that it is better to go "to the house of mourning than to the house of "feasting. And that sorrow is better than laughter; for that by the sadness of the Countenance the heart is made better: and he who is greater than *Solomon*, who himself often weept, but never (that we read) once laughed, pronounceth them *blessed that mourn, for that they shall be comforted.* Matth. 5. 4.

9. This Wilderness importeth a Condition of Weariness and fainting: This yet follows naturally from all that hath been said *Psal.* 107. 5. *those that wander in a Wilderness, their soul fainteth in them*; Psal. 63. 1. *Davids* Wilderness was *a thirsty*, or (as the Original hath it,) a weary *Land*: and *Isai* 32. 2. it is expressly rendered *a weary Land.* The Saints case in their Wilderness is often like that of the *Egyptian.* 1 *Sam.* 30. 11, 12. who was so outwearyed that he fell off from his company and sunk in the Wilderness. *David* often complaineth that he was weak, that his spirit failled, his soul fainted, his throat was dry, his eyes failed whilst he cryed upon the Lord and waited for him. And no wonder it is that the Saints so often weary and faint by the way: but a great wonder it is, that any of them should hold up to the end: They have such long stages in the Race that is set before them, and those in a thirsty Wilderness where hardly they can drink of the brook by the way: and they must run it so oft about with fresh parties whereof possibly

sibly the worst comes last upon them, when they are already so much exhausted, that there is great reason, for him that would wager upon their heads, to ask, whether they have so much confidence remaining as to answer that Question Jer. 12. 5. "If "thou hast run with the footmen and they have "wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with "horses? and if in the land of peace wherein thou "trustedst they wearyed thee, how wilt thou do "in the swelling of Jordan. But the Lord that makes the Question must answer, and one Prophet must Answer another: and how Jeremy could do all that, *Isaiah* can tell *Chap*, 40. from the 28 *verse* to the end: *the everlasting God, the Lord that created the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary*, &c. Let the people of God in their Wilderness expect to have their hands full of it, and as much as shall put them to a strict necessity either to believe or utterly to give it over. Psal, 27. 13. *I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.* Now this is the Wilderness: and thus is answered the first thing in the point, What is the Wilderness.

II. The *second* thing to be considered in the point "is, Wherefore doth the Lord bring his People into "the Wilderdess? The Scripture sheweth that for one or more of these five Reasons the Lord doth this.

1. He doth it for their sin: and that in these five Respects. 1. to convince them of sin. It is long many a time ere the Lords sinful People will see or acknowledge their sin: yea they will say they

they are innocent when their transgressions are most evident. *Jer.* 2 23. and therefore *verse* 35. *I will plead with thee, because thou sayest I have not sinned.* Such as are kindly Melancholians may know by experience, what effectual impressions the change of places hath to the changing of mens minds: and for this it is necessary often times that men be sent to learn that in the Wilderness, which they could not, it may be they would not, see at home in a land inhabited: *Jer.* 22. 21, 22. *I spoke unto thee in thy prosperity, but thou saidest I will not hear, and therefore thou shalt go into captivity.* Affliction is quick-sighted, and necessity is wise and Ingenious: affliction according as it is blest, or not blest of God, hath very contrary effects upon men: *Solomon* tells us *that affliction makes a wise man mad:* and he that is greater than *Solomon* tells us, that affliction sometimes makes a mad man wise *Luk.* 15, 17. it brought a distracted Prodigal to himself. Many men think it a piece of Wit and Gallantry to mantain their sinful courses in a Day of prosperity; and if he be a beneficed person or one in place, he is ill worthy either place or benefice who is so scant of Discourse, that he cannot (*if this our craft be in danger to be set at nought* Act. 19. 27) make an Orarion in defence of *Diana*; and at least, cannot say to his Companions with more truth than Wit, though yet with more Wit than Honesty, *Sirs ye know that by this Craft we have our wealth, ib. verse* 25. Yea if the Lord by his servants plead with some men in Prosperity for their iniquities, anon he shall have a reply till he bring forth his

his Rod which is fitted for the back of fools; and is the only cogent argument with such persons. Take two instances shortly, one is *Isai.* 31. 2. those people were bent upon Idolatry, and when they were reproved and threatned for that by the Lord, then they were confident in the assistance of *Egypt*: and when yet they were taxed for that, no doubt, they would tell the Prophets, Self-defence was not unlawful, and many such witty stories, till the Lord concludes the dispute with that, *yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words, but will arise against the house of the evil doers, and against the help of those that work iniquity.* And now let those great Wits and grand Disputers say to it Jer. 13. 21. *What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee?* Say to that Gallants, or you have said nothing. The next instance is *Ezek.* 17. from 11 *verse* to the end; *Zedekiah* had given an Oath of fealty and subjection to the King of *Babylon*, he Rebells against the King of *Babylon* and breaks his Oath: the Lord pleads with him for that, O! might he say (mark you the Language of our times) it was a forced Oath made against his will: yea, may be, it was an unlawful Oath for him to subject himself and the Lords People to Heathens by a bond: and therefore why might not he take his occasions to break it, if once he had but strength to maintain the breach? And, may be, (as *Papists* think that Faith ought not to be kept to Hereticks, so they call Protestants) he thought neither ought it to be kept to Heathens: But I mark from the place 1. against the *Popish whimsy*, that

that it is called significantly the King of *Babylons* Oath, in the 16 *verse*. I mark 2. In the same *verse* against other Covenant-breakers. That whatever by *Zedekiah* was or might be alledged, it was all but a prophane despising ot the Oath: for untill once it be lawful to take Gods Holy and fearful name in vain; it shall never be any thing els but Prophanity and Perjury to break Covenant upon interest. I mark 3. from the 20 *verse* against all Patrons of Perjury, and such as teach Rebellion against the Lord; the Lords great Argument, which usually he reserves to the Conclusion of such Debates: well, says the Lord, in the 19 *verse*, he hath sworn an Oath, and hath broken it: but I will let him know what an Oath is; I will Swear another and will keep it: *as I live saith the Lord, surely I will recompense it upon his own head.* And in the 20 *verse*, *I will spread my net upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to* Babylon *and will plead with him there, for his trespass that he hath trespassed against me.* And this was performed 2 *Kings* 25. 6, 7. and 2 *Chron.* 36. 20, 21. Prosperity to many is as the day light to Owles and Batts, it daz'ls their eyes, and blinds them, that they do not see their Errors till it be too late. *Zedekiah* saw not his faults till he saw them without his eyes at *Riblah* in the Land of *Hamath.* To say no more of this: if other Arguments will not convince men that are guilty of Perjury, there is a necessity they must go to *Babylon* for Instruction. As the Lord lives, (they are the words of God, and it is their meaning) Per-

jury

Jury shall get a convincing stroak. It is a *Scots* Proverb, As *sore greets the Child that is beaten after noon, as he that is beaten before noon* : The Church of God and his Saints in these Nations have gotten a forenoons correction; but wo to them that get the after-noon stroaks. See the Parables *Jer*, 24 throughout. To conclude this reason then; Let us not seek conviction of our sin the length of the Wilderness, nor at the rate of bitter Affliction: but let us all take the Counsel *Jer*. 6. 8. *Be thou instructed O Jerusalem, lest my Soul depart from thee, lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited*:

The 2*d*. Account whereupon the Lord brings his People into the Wilderness for sin, is, for the vindication of his Glorious and Holy Name from all appearance of connivance at, or partaking with his peoples Sins, *Numb*. 14. 21. *As truly as I live*, sayes he, *all the earth shall be filled with the Glory of the Lord*; that is, with the Glorious manifestation of his Justice against his Peoples Sins: And he often threatens, that those who profane his Name and make it to be Blasphemed, he will return their shame upon their own Faces. If any of us hath a Friend who is leud and dissolute and debauched, we are ashamed of him; because his Faults reflect upon us: And therefore we hold our selves obliged for our own Vindication to testify our displeasure against him. And so it is with the Holy one of *Israel* and his sinful People.

The 3*d*. Account is to imbitter sin to them, Jer. 2. 19. *Know therefore and see, that it is an evil*

things

thing and a bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that his fear is not in thee. As *Abner* said to *Joab* of the war, so I say to every one of their sin, 2 Sam. 2. 26. *Knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end*? Prosperity sweetens sin to Sinners, which of it self is sweet enough to their corrupted Palate: But the Gall and Wormwood of affliction gives it its own kindly relish.

The 4*th*. Account is, that he may put a stop to his People in their course of Sin. Thus *Hosea* 2. 6. *I will hedge up thy way with Thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her Paths*; and verse 7 *She shall not overtake nor find her Lovers*: Many in prosperity are so engaged by custom to courses of Iniquity, which nothing but affliction can interrupt and put a stop to; and they must take their march into the Wilderness to divert them off the Paths of Wickedness. O that all who are in Affliction, and in the Wilderness, would take this advantage of their impetuous over-hailing Lusts and Idols; and had Wisdom to improve such a good occasion, of a perpetual Divorce and Separation, from the sins that were wont easily to beset them, and as easily to prevail with them! It is not time, when people are in the Wilderness, to rush every one to their course, as the Horse rusheth into the Battel, never once asking what is this I am doing: But it is then seasonable *Daniel* 4. 27. *To break off our Sins and Iniquities*; Least we go further on, than that we can safely retire our selves.

The 5*th*. Account is, that they may truly repent and throughly return from Sin to God. In the

the 7 *verse* of this *chapter*, when by affliction she is put to a stand in her course of sin, it is yet intended further, that she return to her first Husband, and this is brought to effect, *Hos: chap.* 6. *verse* 1. *Come*, sayes she, *and let us return unto the Lord: For he hath torn*, &c. Simple cessation from sin, without true conversion in time of affliction, may put a person or People to *Pharaoh*'s Expences of multiplyed Rods and Plagues one after another, with the hazard of utter destruction in the end. Learn we then in the Wilderness to say as is meet to be said unto God, *Job*, 34. 31, 32. *I have born Chastisement, I will not offend any more: That which I see not teach thou me; if I have done iniquity I will do no more.* Let us turn throughly from all iniquity, and that with all our Heart. And thus to the first reason and its several respects, *Why the Lord brings his People into the Wilderness: It* is for their sin.

2. The Lord brings his people into the Wilderness for their Tryal and Exercise, *Deut.* 8. 2. "The Lord did all that unto thee, to prove thee, to "know what was in thine heart, whether thou "wouldest keep his Commandments or not. *Rom.* 5. 3, 4, 5. Tribulation sets all graces on work in the Saints: Thus the Lord dealt with the Church *Psal.* 44. from the 17 *verse* to the 23, and *Psal* 66. 10. Thus he dealt with *Job*. The Lord is come to these Nations with "his fan in his hand, he is "winnowing us as Wheat, and he will throughly "purge his floor *Matth.* 3. 12. "and who may a-"bide the day of his coming? and who shall stand "when he appeareth? for he is like a refyners fire,

"and

" and like fullers sope; and he shall sit as a refiner " and as a purifyer of silver: and he shall purify, " the sons of *Levi*, and purge them as Gold and " Silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an of- " fering in righteousness. *Malach.* 3, 2, 3. Now the secrets of many hearts are discovered: now we see the ground of mens stomachs, and what corruption and rotten stuffe hath been lurking under the beauty of untryed profession. Would not some have said, am I a dog? if that which they have now done had been told them a few years ago. Now it is seen *Daniel.* 11. 34. that *many did cleave to the Covenant with flatteries*; but the next *verse* being the 35. says further, That *some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end, because it is yet for a time appointed.* Therefore blessed is he that endureth to the end. And let him that standeth take heed lest he fall. The strange discoveries, the great stumbling, and many offfallings of men in these times, afford me the serious and confirmed thoughts, how few there are that shall be saved, and how hardly these few. *Malachie*'s *refiners fire* comprehends both all the tryals of a present time, and also and specially, the great and solemn last tryal of the Judgment of the great day, when *many a mans work shall be burnt up, and himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.* 1 Cor. 3. 15. then shallall the sinners and hypocrits in *Zion* be affraid and surprized: for that *they cannot dwell with devouring fire, nor with everlasting burnings.* Isai. 33, 14. There will be many amissing that day in

the Congregation of the righteous, that here have sitten chief in the Assembly. In general this is the verity: but towards the particular persons of others, I must walk with Charity, as toward myself, with fear and humble Jealousie: This only all would remember, that they who cannot endure the wide sieve of larger tryals in a present time, will never be able to abide the narrow search of a strict judgment at the end of time. But as the Lord will have his People tryed, so he will have them likwise Exercised and their Graces imployed. Idleness is a hateful and unhappy evil in People. We say an idle man must always have something to work; he that ceaseth to do well, will soon learn to do ill. To prevent that, the Lord puts work in his Peoples hand: for he hath not given them Graces and Talents, to hide in a napkin under the earth, but to be imployed and improven to use: and therefore he appoints affliction as a task master to call forth all their Graces to work, and to receive the Tale of every mans Work, that it may be known what profit they make. The time of affliction should be a bussy time, like Earing time and Harvest, to the People of God. But alas! to many may be said in truth, that which *Pharaoh* said to the *Israelites* in cruel scorn, *ye are idle, ye are idle* Exod. 3. 17. Only his inference and mine run very contrary. ye are idle, says he, and therefore ye say, *let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord.* But ye are idle, say I, and therefore ye say not *let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord* Now, if the Lord bring his People into affliction for their Exercise

ercise, hence it is consequentially inferred, that if their Afflictions do not Exercise them to purpose, they are not like to come out of them in haste. I fear many but play with their Afflictions, and look upon all the sad sights they see in the Wilderness, but as so many farleyes, fit to entertain their curiosity and to cause them gaze: And I exhort all to be serious with their Afflictions.

3. The Lord brings his People to the Wilderness, that they may be the more fit to receive the impressions of his will, and communications of his Goodness. Thus we see throughout this *Chapter*, the *Lord* designes jointly her Reformation and Consolation by all these bitter threatnings and afflicting Dispensations. And *Chapter* 5, 15. of this same Prophesy of *Hosea. I will go*, says the Lord *and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: In their Affliction they will seek me early.* And (as the whole have no need of the Physician, but the sick) they now finding the disease of their Affliction to purpose, and so being the better fitted for the Communications of the Lords goodness, in their deliverance, return to him in this confidence, *that he who hath torn will heal them* &c. and that his coming to them, *verse* 3*d*, shall be as the rain to the earth, which being parched with drought is well ready for a showre. People in Prosperity readily are not so fit to receive either the impressions of Gods will; for then speak to them, and they will not hear, *Jer.* 22. 1. Or the Communications of his Goodness: for then they can say *we are Lords, and we will not come to thee.*

Jer. 2. 31. But Affliction fits them better both for the one and for the other. In prosperity, as in the noise of a City, every thing is heard; but nothing is hearkened to: and the common noise swallows up the most distinct and audible voices in a confused insignificant sound. But in Affliction, as in a Wilderness, the stillest whisper of a voice is soon discerned and seriously attended to. Likwise in prosperity, as in a plentiful City or Country, men enjoy all things, and esteem nothing: but in Affliction, as in a Wilderness, wanting all or many things, they account the more of any thing. In a Word, the Lord in the Wilderness and by Affliction is tuneing his People to Obedience, that he may bring them forth singing the Songs of Deliverance. Gods commands and his mercies will have another kind of lustre and relish to a Soul coming out of a sanctified Wilderness. Formality in Religion, with much vanity and many superfluities wait but too well upon Prosperity: but the cold wind of the Wilderness bloweth these all away, and strengthens the vital heat of the inward man, and makes folk more Religious than formerly with less noise and adoe. Prosperity is an unthankful Piece: for readily the more it receives, the less it accounts of what it receives; and (as a full Soul loaths the honey comb) with a fastidious insolency it thinks, and by falsely thinking truely makes abundance of mercy a very misery: but (as to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet) the Wilderness, and an afflicted lot blessed of God, will give a man a good stomach for a piece of the bread of

Adver-

Adversity, and a Cup of the cold water of Affliction; and will teach him to say Grace to it thus: *I am less than the least of all thy mercies* Genes. 32, 10. So said *Jacob* when he was coming from his twenty years travels in the Wilderness of his Afflictions in *Padan Aram*. Prosperity extenuates, sanctified Adversity aggravates mercies: to it any thing less than Hell is a mercy. *Lament.* 3. 22. *It is of the Lords mercies that we are not consumed*: to it any mercy is a great Mercy: a great mercy is an extraordinary one: and an extraordinary is a marvelous incomprehensible one. Prosperity counts its mercies by Subtraction, it will take its Bill with the unjust Steward, and for a hundred it will write fourscore, and for fourscore, it will write fifty: But in the Wilderness men learn to cast up their Mercies by Multiplication with the help of Division: in the same place cited *Lament.* 3. 22. *That we are not consumed*, to some might seem but one mercy, and that a poor one too: yea but the lamenting Prophet finds mercies in that mercy. And truely the mercies of the Lord are homogeneous things, whereof every part hath the Nature and Denomination of the whole: as every drop of water is water; so the least piece of any Mercy is Mercy: and the afflicted, humble, thankful Soul loves to anatomize and dissect the Lords Mercies into parts, as Physicians do humane bodies, that they may informe themselves the better of the number and nature of the parts, and of the frame and structure of the whole. The 136 *Psalme* hath this common with those Mercies which it recounts, that there is more in it than every one can see:

This only to my purpose, everyone may see, how the *Psalmist* tells out the *Lords* Mercies by parts, and insists upon one and the same Mercy, to shew that every part of it is a Mercy; and that, as all the rest, derived from the underived, uncreated, unexhaustible, and ever runing fountain of the *Lords* Mercy that endures for ever. Prosperity, like the Widow and her Sons in the matter of the oil, loses and comes short of many Mercies for want of the vessels of faithful accounts and thankful acknowledgments. The Saint in the Wilderness as the Disciples in a desart place, obeys *Christs* Frugal command, it gathers up the remaining Fragments of mercies that nothing be lost, and with those it fills whole baskets: As by the blessing and miraculous Power of Christ, the broken meat, after that Dinner, whereat so many thousands were well filled, was more than that which at the first was set down whole. O! but it is good holding house with *Christ*! It is good to have our portion, be otherwise what it will, with his presence and Blessing, and to have it coming thorow his hands. And as the power of divine contentment can make πλεον ἡμισυ παντος the half more nor the whole; so the Wilderness will teach the People of God, the mystery of improving Mercies, to make the increase more than the stock. This, as the rest of divine Arts, is best profest in the Wilderness: and therefore it is that the Lord sends so many of his most hopeful Children thither to be bred: and there they are continued till they have past their Course and taken their Degrees, and

then

then they return Masters of the Arts able to teach others, and *to comfort them with the same comforts wherewith they themselves were comforted of Christ.* 2 Cor. 1. 4.

4. The Lord brings his People into the Wilderness, that he may lead them by, and deliver them from that which is worse. *Exod.* 13. 17, 18. *And it came to pass when Pharoah had let the People go, that God led them not thorow the way of the land of the Philistins, though that was near: for God said lest peradventure the People repent when they see war and they return to Egypt; but God led the People about thorow the way of the Wilderness of the red sea.* The Lord prepares his People a place in the Wilderness from the fury and persecutions of men. *Rev.* 12. 6. And albeit before, I called Persecution one of the parts of a Wilderness-Condition; yet I would have it understood, that every one that comes into the Wilderness, is not led thorow all the Wilderness, nor made to see all the evils thereof, nor do all Afflictions tryst upon every afflicted person: for often times God makes one a mean to prevent and escape another: even as in the case in hand, the Lord sends sometimes his People to enjoy *Davids* and *Jeremys* wishes in the Wilderness, that so they may be ridd of ill neighbours: for we say in the Proverb, *Better be alone than in ill Company.* And likwise the Lord by bringing his People into the Wilderness delivers them from the contagion and vexation of the sins of those with whom they conversed aforetimes. Albeit the Wilderness, as I before said, be a place of temptation;

yet the Lord, by some one tentation which his People can better guide, many times leads them out of the way of some other one or moe which might be of more hazard to them. Surely it is no small mercy to be out of the way, when tentations are marching thorow all the land in solemn procession, and they cry before them, *bow the knee*, and when the wicked walk on every side, who but the vilest men, (*Psal.* 12, 8.) would covet the preferment of the midst? And would not any person of a Holy breath, prefer a Cottage in a well aired Wilderness, to the foul winds and corrupt infectious air of these plaguy times? The plague of a general defection which (as the Pest doth other deseases) hath engrossed all abominations, is now so common, that except it were with *Aaron Numb.* 16. 48. *to stand between the dead and the living* with the incense of much intercession, that, if it be possible, the plague may by stayed, I should think him a person of that stoutness which they call rashness, and of a pretty well confirmed, if not of a much hardned heart, who otherwise could gladly come into the Company of, or mix himself with the men of this Generation. We say *when all fruits fail, fire is good for the farsey*: if God cure this Generation of one Plague by another, I shall think it no more than is necessary: for *Psal.* 14. 3. generally *they are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doth good, no, not one*: And now I think I hear a voice from Heaven saying of this Generation, as that other *Rev.* 18. 4

Remark how the Plague followed in London, *the next year 1666.*

18. 4 said to *John*, of *Mystical Babylon*; *come out of her my people, that ye may not be partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her Plagues.* And there is another great mischief that the *Lord* leads his People out of its way,, in bringing them into the Wilderness, and it is the Plagues that come upon wicked men, and all Gods enemies. The People of God want not their own visitations, but they are not like the Plagues of the wicked, their enemies. *Isai.* 27. 7. *hath he smiten him as he smote those that smote him? or is he slain according to the slaughter of those that are slain by him?* Yea the Saints Afflictions are excellent Antidotes and preservatives against the Plagues of their enemies, who are not as, but indeed are the Ungodly and the Wicked. We see the properity of the Saints Afflictions *Psal.* 94. 12, 13. *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law, that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, till the pit be digged for the wicked.* A strange thing a mans *motto* to be *perissem nisi perussem*: I had perished, if I had not perished: and that chastisment should hide a man from the day of adversity: But both the History of Scripture, and the Saints experience from time time in all Generations, do yeeld abundance of particular instances in confirmation of this General assertion. It appears by *Lots* slowness to depart, that he took it as a grief to go out of *Sodom* filthy as it was: and yet the Lord by that is sending him out of the midst of the overthrow. It is no doubt a grief and great Affliction to many of the Saints and Servants of God, that they are removed from their people and place: But when judg-

Judgements come upon a place, better to be away than in place. And in the judgment of judicious and great Divines, it prognosticats no good to a place, when the Saints and Servants of God are driven out thereof. Let any read *Musculus* upon *Math.* 24. Alas then for her that bare me, and whose Breasts gave me suck! for the City the place of my Nativity and education, for the word that is past upon her, and the Prophesy: *When it shall be said to faithful Ministers of the Gospel, go here or go there; go to the south, or go to the north, but go not to* Edinburgh, *then wo to thee O* Edinburgh. These are the words and Prophesy of Mr. *Robert Rollock*, which are to be seen in Print before the translation of his book upon the *Colossians*, And is not this the time spoken of.

5. The *Lord* brings his People into the Wilderness, to Humble them, that they may know of whom they hold mercies, and learn afterwards in prosperity to carry soberly. When *Israel* was upon the entry of a land flowing with milk and honey, *Moses* insists wisely throughout the book of *Deuteronomy* upon the Memory of their case in the Wilderness, and tells them plainly *Chap.* 8. *verse* 2. The *Lord* did all that to humble thee: To this end it was that the Lord commanded the pot of *Manna* to be kept by the Ark; and for this was institute the feast of Tabernacles. Prosperity is an insolent Piece, and will readily cause men forget their maker that hath done all these things for them, and came a free-hold of mercies: *we are Lords* say they, *and therefore we will come no more unto thee,*

Jer:

Jer. 2. 31. Or els they will give the Glory of their mercies unto Idols, in this same *Hosea* 2. 5. "I will go after my lovers, says she, who give me "my bread and my water; my wool and my flax, "mine oil and my drink: and therefore the Lord is concerned for the mantainance of his right, to put them out of possession, till they make a legal entry by a humble acknowledgment to him their righteous superior, and be repossessed by a *novo damus*, as is clear from this *Chapter*. And many other ways the insolency of Prosperity is expressed to the dishonour of God, and damnage and hurt of our neighbours, by Prophanity, Presumtion, carnal Confidence, Intemperancy, Oppression, and the like: and therefore sayeth the *Lord*, Zeph. 3. 12. 13. *I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor People, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord*, and the Remnant of *Israel* shall not do iniquity. He that knows how he has gain'd his Estate, should know how he imploys it, and they that come to mercies hardly, should use them well and humbly. If ever God bring his Church and People again to good days and Prosperity, O! Let it be remembred that once we were in the Wilderness. And thus to the *second* thing in the point *viz.* "Wherefore doth the Lord bring his People "into the Wilderness?

Follows the *Use* which is the 3*d* thing in the point. The first Use is of warning, and I would sound an alarme, and proclame a march into the Wilderness to all the People of God. Our Leader and Commander, *Jesus Christ* the Captain of our Salvation

Salvation hath long since taken the field, and is gone out on our head *Heb:* 13. 12, 13. Let us then who have taken the Sacrament and Military Oath of *Christ*, and have given our names unto him, go forth unto him without the camp bearing his reproach. The cloud is now lifted up from over the Tabernacle: and therefore it is time for the Children of *Israel* to set forth: yea the Ark of the Lord, his Ordinances and his People with the best of their Leaders are already in the fields, and are suffering hardship as good souldiers. Let us not then for shame lurch at home, let us learn the Religious Gallantry of *Uriah* the *Hittite* that valiant man, 2 *Samuel* 11. 11. "And *Uriah* said unto "*David*, the Ark and *Israel* and *Judah* abide in "tents, and my Lord *Joab* and the servants of my "Lord are incamped in the open fields; shall I "then go into mine house to eat and to drink, "and to ly with my Wife? as thou livest, and as "thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing. It is time our loins were girded, our shoes were on our feet, our staff in our hand, and our stuff and provision upon our shoulder: for we must to the Wilderness, and what if we go out in haste? It is good to be in good Company: *it is better* (if *Moses* had any skill) *to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season* Heb. 11. 25. They who will not suffer with the people of God may suffer with worse Company. They who will not go forth with *Lot* unto the mountains, may possibly sit still till they get brimstone and fire from Heaven, and the smoak of *Sodom* about their

ears:

ears: for he that will save his life unlawfully shall loss it unhappily: and he that will loss his life in Resolution, may find it in Reality. Even as a man doth, in stepping of a Ditch, with any thing that is either of weight or worth to him, his Cloak, his Case of letters, or Papers of concernment, his heavy purse or the like, lest he loss and indamnage himself and them both, he casts all over before him, and so coming over with the less trouble, he lifts all again upon the other side, and so losses nothing of that which he cast away, but that he might keep it and himself both; whereas if he had kept all about him, he might have lost himself and all together: but *all is not ost that is in peril*: Let us then with chearfulness turn our face towards the Wilderness.

The *second Use* shall be for Information to all such of the Lords People, as are either upon their way to the Wilderness, or are already arrived there: they would not think strange of such a condition: it has been, it is, and it will be the lot of the *Lords* Children *Cant.* 8. 5, the high way to Christs mountain of Myrrh and hill of frankincense lyes thorow the Wilderness, and there he comes forth to meet them, and leads them up in his bosome, leaning upon his own arms. There doth no strange thing befall the Saints when the Lord brings them into the Wilderness: for even as *Moses Exod.* 3. 1. led his flocks into the backside of the desart (and was not that a presage of what followed, when he led *Israel* as a flock through the Wilderness?) so doth the *Lord* oft times with his People: albeit the Wilderness is a solitary unfrequented place where no

foot

foot of man cometh; yet in it you may take up and trace the footsteps of the *Lords* flock who through much tribulation have entred into the Kingdome of God, and there ye may follow them who through faith and patience have inherited the promises. The Saints will find the footsteps of the flock in their greatest Wilderness, and may be helped with the light of precedent Examples in their greatest darkness. For now that the Lord through so many ages, hath led his Saints to Heaven, by so many different paths of Dispensations, (for there is but one common road of Religion, the Kings high Way) I doubt there is any untroden path remaining to be discovered by this Generation. I only fear one difference, which makes indeed a great odds in lots, be found betwixt our case and the case of those that have gone before us, and it is this; That they were better men in as ill times, for worse I would none. But in that, I pray whom shall we blame? and know we not how that should be helped? See that ye *walk circumspectly as wise, and not as fools: redeeming the time; because the days are evil.* Eph. 5. 15, 16. If ill times find no good men; let ill times make good men; and good men will make good times, or els bad times shall make good men better. But of the Parity of cases I said much in the Preface.

The *Third Use* of the point shall be for Direction: since the People of God may thus expect to be rought into the Wilderness, it concerns them to take their directions for the Wilderness: for our direction in such a condition, I shall, without insist

insisting, briefly hint at some things 1 to be avoided. 2*dly* some things to be endeavoured

Things to be avoided by such as are brought into the Wilderness, are 1 Unbelief. *Psal.* 78. 22, 23. the *Israelites* believed not God in the Wilderness, and therefore he was provoked *Heb.* 3. 18, 19. the *Apostle* tells us expressly, that *those who believed not, their carcasses fell in the Wilderness, and for their unbelief, they could not enter into the land of promise.*

2, Discouragment would be avoided *Numb.* 14. 1. the People through Discouragment cryed and weept for the report that the spyes gave them. and frequently els-where, they expressed their Discouragement upon the emergency of every new difficulty, *their cry was* always, *that they should die in the Wilderness*: and in that they read their own fortune, *Numb.* 14. 28. for the Lord was provoked for their unbelief and other sins, to do to them as they had said. Beware of *Unbeliefs bode-words*; for like the *Devil*'s responses their accomplishments are always evil to those that take them. In all the World I know no such ready way to Apostacy, and utter forsaking of God as Discouragment. Experience hath said so much to confirme this, that I shall not need to bring reason into the field: But this I must say, have the experience of Discouragment who will, they have it to their expences. And if I were to die, I would leave Discouragment this testimony that it is *dear bought misery.*

3. Avoid Murmuring, fretting discontentment with

with the Lords Dispensations with complaints of his unkindness. *Numb.* 14. 2. *all the Children of Israel murmured, and* Chap. 16. 42. *they murmured against* Moses *and* Aaron: But *Moses* could tell them, what are we, that ye speak against us: nay but your words are against the *Lord*; yea and *Numb.* 21. 5. it is expressly said, *the People spoke against God and against* Moses. And still their tune was, *why have ye brought us up out of* Egypt? Just like many in our Generation, why say they, your Reformation, your Covenant and your Ministers have served you well: but verily their words are against the Lord: for we owne his name in these, and glorify him whom they dishonour. When the Children of *Israel* murmured in the Wilderness, they had forgotten how once they groaned because of their oppression in *Egypt*: and in that they may be more excusable than we: for the Red sea had ridd perpetual marches betwixt them and their oppressours; but we get not leave to forget our oppression in the times of our former subjection to them, who derive their power from her who is spiritually called *Sodom* and *Egypt Revel*: 11. 8. I mean *Prelats* who are indeed the house of the Elder brother, but fallen back, for that they have come short of the blessing; and now hold of the *Pope*, the younger, who hath supplanted them handsomely, and got betiwxt them and the Birth-right; so that now the Elder serves the Younger: those, I say, pursue even to the Wilderness, according as it is prophesied *Rev.* 12. where John *saw the Dragon pursue the travelling woman into the Wilderness.*

4. We

4. We would beware of Tempting God. *Psal.* 106. 14. *they tempted God in the desart*, and what that temptation was, see *Psal.* 78. 18. 19. 20. They limited the Lord, and said, *can God furnish a table in the Wilderness? can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his People?* whatever our temptations be in a Wilderness, though we should fast till we be as Hungry as *Christ* was in the Wilderness, yet let us learn of him, not to tempt the Lord, by limiting him to ordinary means, since it is writen that *man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God*, neither let us rashly nor presumptuously cast our selves into any needless difficulty, nor cast our selves down from a pinacle of the Temple: for that again it is written, *thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* Just thoughts of God, (and these are large ones) would fit the Saints with a present help in all imaginable difficulties, *Psal.* 46. 1. *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

5. We would beware of unmortified, imperious, clamorous lusts. *Psal.* 106. 14. "They lusted "exceedingly, in the Wilderness, and *Psal.* 78. 18. *they sought meat for their lust.* God had given meat for themselves: but they must have meat for their lusts also. Truely he had need have a good rent that would keep a table for his lusts: for lust is so ill to satisfy, that albeit one World serves all the men in the World, yet all the World will not satisfy the lust of one man of the World: Witness he who weept that there were not moe Worlds to conquer. But he who must have his lust as soon

served as himself, that man is not for the Wilderness. I shall advise all that are brought into the Wilderness, to do with their lusts, as *Moses* did with his Wife and Children when he went with *Israel* into the Wilderness, send them back, dismiss them for fear they make more adoe. *Solomon* prefers the Wilderness to the Company of a clamorous angry Woman in a wide house: but how miserable must he be who lives in Company with those scolding wretches, his craving clamorous lusts, even in the Wilderness.

6. We would beware of Apostacy and turning back unto *Egypt*: *Numb.* 14. 4. *They said one to another, let us make a Captain, and let us return into* Egypt: And *verse* 3. *Were it not better for us, (say they) to return into* Egypt? Whatever we meet with in the Wilderness, or whatever may be before us, O let us never think of going back into *Egypt*. *Luk.* 17. 32. *Remember Lots wife.* Remember *Heb.* 10. 38. *that the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him*, saith the Lord. Remember (as I have said even now) we find our *Egyptian* oppression more grievous than ever.

Now for positive Directions and things to be indeavoured by all, that are brought into the Wilderness, take these. 1. And before all, we would labour for the Pardon of sin, and the presence of a reconciled God: This was *Davids* great suit *Psal.* 79, 8. *O Remember not against us former iniquities, but let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low*: and in the 9 *verse*, "hel
us

"us, O Lord, for the honour of thy name, and "purge away our sin. And over and again in the 80 *Psalme*, as in many others, his request is, *make thy face to shine upon us.* *Moses* was very peremptory in this: for *Exod.* 32. 32. he says, and "now "if thou wilt, forgive this sin: if not, blot me I "pray thee out of thy book, which thou hast "written: and in the 33. *Chapter* 15 *verse* he adds, "if thy presence go not with me, carry us not "up hence. Unpardoned guilt and an unreconciled God, will be very uncomfortable Company in a Wilderness.

2. As *Moses* in the Wilderness *Numb.* 13. we would spy the good land that is before, of the twelve that were sent, only two, *Joshua* and *Caleb* were faithful in their report: *Moses* himself trusted their Relation, and put them on to pacify the clamorous People. *Faith* and *Hope* are the two only faithful spies, that will be sure to give such a report of their Discoveries, as may both confirme Believers, and compose the tumults, and quiet the clamours of unbelieving spirits. This was it, that sustained the *Apostles*, without fainting in all their Afflictions: this was the star that guided them thorow their Wilderness. 2 *Cor.* 4. 18. "We look "not at the things which are seen, but at the things "which are not seen. In our way through the Wilderness we would raise our estimations of Heaven, thither we would direct our expectations, and thence we would derive our sure consolations, we would see if the spies can bring us down, now and then, a branch of the Grapes of the Land for our

refreshment: and if our Father will honour us with a present of the first fruits of our inheritance, or a Cup of the new Wine of the Kingdome, that we may (as we use to speak) Remember him in the Wilderness. *Psal.* 116. 13. that we may *take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord.* In the History of *Israels* travels, *Exod.* 19. 2, we read, that "when they came to "the desart and pitched in the Wilderness, they "encamped before the Mount, and *Moses*, in the 3*d verse*, *went up unto God.* We would so order our camp in the Wilderness, as that we may be always within sight of the mount: We would labour, in all our wanderings, to keep a clear sight of Heaven, and to have our head within the clouds; as it is said of *Moses* Exod. 24. 18. Moses *went into the midst of the cloud, and got him up into the mount.*

3. The People of God in the Wilderness would remember much, both what God hath done formerly to his People in the like condition, and what he hath promised to do for those that afterward shall come into it. Albeit the Scripture generally all over aboundeth with matter to this purpose: yet for the first, what God hath done, I recommend specially the *four last books of* Moses which are an exact journal of *Israels* travels in the Wilderness: for the latter, what he hath promised to do, read the 35 *Chapter* of *Isaiah* throughout with *Chap.* 41. from *verse* 16. *to* 22. *with* 42, 16 *with* 49. 9. 10. 11. 12. *with* 61. *to the* 9. *with* 62. 24. 25. See *Jer.* 12. 10. 11. 14. and to the end

wit

with *Jer.* 23, *to the* 5. See *Ezek.* 34. throughout. *Psal.* 107. *to the* 9. with this 2*d chap. of Hosea* throughout, all these (as *I* said) not to exclude other places which may be obvious to those that are better versed in Scripture, *I* do Recommend.

4. In the Wilderness, we would be much in Intimate and more than ordinary fellowship with God: as *I* cited of *Moses* before, we would enter the Clouds and go up into the Mount to God: and we shall be no homlier than welcome. *Cant* 4, 8, invites us to this. We never find *David* higher upon it, than in the Wilderness. We owe that sweet 63 *Psalme* to the Wilderness of *Judah*, in the 8 *verse* whereof it is said, "my soul followeth hard "after thee, thy right hand upholdeth me; and in the 5 *verse*, "my soul shall be satisfied as with "marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise "thee with joyful lips. *If* a Soul make a visit to God from the Wilderness, they may expect *Joseph's* Brethrens entertainment, they may resolve to Dine with him at noon. Our *Lord Jesus* learned this of his Father, "This is a desart place, says he, "and we cannot send the People away fast-"ing lest they faint by the way. Yea and after they may have that sweet Musick; "my soul "shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and "my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips; and *Psal.* 57. 7, 8. *my heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed*, O *Lord*, says he, *I* am now well at my heart; *I will sing and give praise: Awake up my Glory, awake Psaltery and harp; I myself will awake early*: and that

was also a Wilderness *Psalme*. We owe the 42 *Psalme* to the Wilderness likwise, and the 84 whereof more anone. Take we then the direction, that the times of our affliction be times of more than ordinary Communion with God.

5. In the Wilderness we would be diligent to seek good occasions and means for the relief of our Afflictions, and supply of our wants: Need must make vertue with us, *Psal.* 84. 5. 6. *Blessed is the man in whose heart is the ways of them, who passing thorow the vally of Baca, make it a well.* We must not like the unjust Steward, refuse in this case both to dig and beg: we must use all means lawful both spiritual and natural, with God and men: we must with *Nehemiah*, both Pray to the Good God of Heaven, and supplicat the King. *Nehemiah* 2. 4, 5. The day has been when the Nobles and Estates of *Scotland* and our Courtiers, would have suted and courted the King for a Commission, to build the City of the *Lord* and of their Fathers Sepulchers, the Church owning that Faith wherein their Fathers Died, who have left there to Posterity the Sepulchers and lasting Monuments of their Fidelity, *Zeal* and Religious gallantry when a Great man would have pleaded for a liberty and protection to a faithful Minister. Then *Israel* and the Lords People in their bounds, in commendation of their *Zeal* and Diligence sang that song *Numb.* 21. 17, 18. "Spring up O well, "sing ye unto it: the Princes digged the well, the "Nobles of the People digged it by the direction "of the Law-giver with their staves. But now

since

since our Princes and Nobles turned herdmen to the *Philistines*, and servants to *Prelates*, their work hath been to stop, and take away, and strive for *Isaac's* wells, to deprive the People of God, moe ways than one, of those occasions of pure and plentiful Ordinances, which they had digged and drunk of: had with labour provided and with refreshment enjoyed. See the case in ane *Allegory Gen.* 26. from the 17. *verse* to 23. I fear when this generation is gone (and if carcasses fall not in the Wilderness, if God make not a clean field, if he do not root out, and make a speedy riddance of this evil Generation from the face of the earth, wiser men than I are much deceaved) that *Nigrum theta* or black mark shall be found written upon the Sepulchres of most of our Nobles, *Nehemiah* 3. 5. *that they put not their necks to the work of their Lord.* And when it is come to that, then who knows but the sons and little ones of our Nobles may be Well-diggers; And as it was in the case of the drought, *Jer.* 14. 3. may come to the waters and to the pitts; may be such as shall seek out, and labour for the means of their Souls refreshment: The *Lord* may bring the little Ones of those transgressors, whose carcasses fall in a Wilderness, into a land flowing with milk and hony, *Numb.* 14. 31, 32. Mean time, let us be digging in the Wilderness, let us seek occasions for our Souls, and where we do not find them, let us make them.

6. In the Wilderness, we would thankfully receave and improve thriftily all offers of accidentall

occasions that providence layes to our hand. *Psal*, 84. 6. *the rain also filleth the* Pools, that is, the *Lord* will now and then be giving his out-wearyed People, some unexpected means of present relief and refreshment, which they must acknowledge and use, till they get better and more lasting occasions. Rain water in a Pool, is neither so good nor so enduring, as a spring or fountain of living Water: and yet the former is good, where the latter cannot be had: for to the hungry Soul, every bitter thing is sweet, and little will do a poor man good. If God give us an occasion of a good Sermon, or a Communion, or make any other good means to drop upon our heads, as unexpectedly as the rain falls from the Heaven; or if we have the benefit of the neighbour-hood of a faithful Minister for the time, these things, howbeit for their nature and vertue they be fountain water, yet herein the best of them is but like a Pool, that they are of an uncertain endurance. For such is the condition of these Wilderness-times, that where one day you have a fountain, the next day you have nothing, or an empty cistern: nor is there throughout all the land, so much as one *Rehoboth Gen.* 26. 22. "one "well that the *Philistines* do not striive for. Therefore we must drink for the drought that is to come, "we must hear for the time that is to come; *Isai.* 42. 23. we must make the best we can of every occasion that remaines, or accidentally offers for the time, and we must feed upon the little Oyl in the cruise and the handful of Meal in the barrel, till there be plenty in the Land.

7. In

7. In the Wilderness we would make use of good Company: yea we would make much of it where ever we can have it. *Psal.* 84. 7. *they go from strength to strength*, as our Translation reads it, but the Original hath it, *They go from company to company, or, from troop to troop*. Indeed solitude and want of good Company is not the least of the evils of the Wilderness, as I shewed above, in the description of the wilderness: and I believe the People of God in these times will bear me witness in this. But we would seek good Company and make use of it. *Mal.* 3. 16 *the fearers of God*, that were then in the Wilderness, *spake often one to another*. But wandering and unsettlment (another great mischief of the Wilderness) will not let the Saints lodge together: and for that the word of the *Psalme* says, *they go from Company to Company*: when they are driven from one Company, they must draw in to another. Many men never grow good till they are going to die (and indeed, in this World, he that mindes to be good, may make him for another World; and blessed be God, we know of another) even so the Saints oft times scarce begin to know the usefulness and sweetness of one anothers Company, nor to use it accordingly, till they must want it. Nor do they any thing worthy of their Society, till they be going to separat. *I said in my heart, that this also is vanity* and a sore evil. Learn we then more timely to make use of good Company,

8. In all our motions and removes in the Wilderness, we would follow and be Ruled by the

Cloud

Cloud of Gods presence: thus *Israel* was guided through the Wilderness, See *Numbers* 9. from the 15. *verse* to the end. The Cloud was a visible token and Sacrament of Gods presence with them. We would so live and so move in the Wilderness, as that we keep always in the presence of God, I mean his propitious comforting presence, whither the presence of God directs us, thither let us go, be it East, West, North, or South, be it fore ward, backward, to the Right hand or left hand. And where we cannot abide with Gods presence, if the Cloud of the Lords presence be lifted up to us off a place, be it otherways never so commodious and sweet; let us not take it evil to leave that place. If God say to us, as to *Abraham*, *Gen.* 12. 1. *get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy Fathers house, unto a land that I will shew thee*; Let us, with *Abraham*, obey and be gone: let our desire be only with *Jacob*, *Gen*, 28. 20, *that God may be with us in the way*, and then let him take us through fire, through water, through a Wilderness, or what he will. If the Cloud remove from *Elim* a wealthy and pleasant place, where are twelve wells of water and threescore and ten Palm-trees, so that we may there encamp by the waters, *Exod* 15. 27. to the Wilderness of *Sin*, an impleasant and a scant place, where we may be threatned to be even slain with hunger, *Exod.* 16. 3. we must march with the Cloud. In a word we must so carry our selves in our whole course, as that we may have the *Lords* presence and propitious countenance whatever we do,

do, wherever we be. In this case, let us sing the 24 Psalme, *The earth is the Lords and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein,* And *Psal.* 4. *v.* 6, 7, 8. must be our song. Let men project and pursue for themselves places of pleasure, preferment and profit, (as most shamfully they do) let them carve and cut out Fortunes and Portions for themselves, and let them with noise divide the spoil of a Church that is fallen into the hands of her enemies, who are the wicked of the earth; and of many faithful Ministers who like the man in the Parable *Luk:* 10, 30. *have fallen among thieves* : But stay till mischief and evil go a hunting, and then their ill come Places shall not know them. *Psal.* 140. 11. *evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him*; but in the mean time, what comes of the poor outcasts and wanderers? Why, they shall not want a place to go to; in the 13. *verse* of that 40 *Psal. the upright shall dwell in thy presence* : They may travel through places enough; but be their harbour what will, that is there home. And as it is a *hidden* place to Worldlings, so it is a *hiding* place to them, *Psal.* 31. 20. *thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence,* untill the Lord return to build up Jerusalem, and then he will gather the out-casts of *Israel*, *Psal.* 147. 2. for "he that scattered *Israel* will gather "him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock; "for the *Lord* hath redeemed Jacob aud ransomed "him from the hand of him that was stronger "then he: Therefore they shall come and sing in the

"the height of *Zion*, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, *Jer.* 31. 10, 11, 12. and foreward to the 15 *verse*. Take we therefore the conduct of Gods presence in the Wilderness, and let us be thereof so observant, that by the least wink of his eye we be directed (*Psal.* 32. 8. *I will guide thee with mine eye*) to sit still, or set out, to turn to the Right hand or to the left at his pleasure: and be our turnings in the Wilderness what they will, be sure we are not out of the way, so long as we enjoy Gods presence, and the comfort of the light of his Countenance. And that will make us with *Moses*, *Heb.* 11. 27. endure all that we meet with, *who endured, as seeing him that is invisible.*

9. In the Wilderness we would live by faith, and learn to take God for all things, *Psal.* 84. 4. *blessed are they that dwell in thy house*, they will be seeing and enjoying many things, that will make them praise thee; But what if they be put to travel through the valley of *Baca*? then in the 5 *verse*, *Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee. He is the fountain.* Psal. 36. 9. and he it is that makes all the streams of his Peoples consolations to flow in their seasons, *Psal.* 87. 7. *all my springs are in thee*: O but it is well lost that is found in God! and all that is happily wanted which is supplyed in him. O for more of the fountain! O for a larger faith to draw at this deep Well! O Noble Well! a Well that in all our journeys will follow us. 1. *Cor*, 10. 4. we read that *the Israelites drank of a spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.*

We

We may still encamp and ly about these waters, be our marches what they will in the Wilderness. This is the only *Rehoboth*, *the well of Room*: the *Philistines* cannot trouble this Well: *It* is of a higher spring than that enemies can get up to stop it: if the *Lord* make his paths to drop fatness, if they drop upon the Pastures of the Wilderness, see who can hinder it: for the rain waits not for man, nor stayeth it for the son of man; therefore blessed is the man (Jer. 17. 7, 8.) "that "trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the "Lord is; for he shall be as a tree planted by the "waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the "river, and shall not see when heat cometh; but "her leaf shall be green, and she shall not be car-"ful in the year of drought, neither shall cease "from yeelding fruit. O let us entertain those large thoughts of God that I have now so often recommended, and then without boasting we may say with him, that was as oft in the Wilderness as another, *Psal.* 34. 2. *my soul shall make her boast in the Lord.* If they be spiritual, sanctuary mercies that we miss, then remember *Ezek.* 11. 16. *Although I have scattered them among the Countreys; yet will I be to them a little Sanctuary in the Countreys where they shall come.* Remember and sing 84, *Psal.* already cited, with *Psal.* 63. and 42. If they be temporal earthly mercies that we desiderat, then remember *Psal*, 24. above cited with, *Deut.* 8.2.3. "the Lord led thee through the Wilderness "and humbled thee with hunger, and gave thee "*Manna*, that he might make thee know that man "doth

" doth not live by bread only; but by every word " that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, " doth man live. I leave it to every one to try what is in God, and in the blessing of God. And in the mean time, let us learn to take more upon trust with God. There is no waste ground in God: meet his People with scant where they will, they will meet with none in him. *Jer.* 2. 31. *have I been a Wilderness unto* Israel? sayes God: they could not say he had. Even as *Christ* said to his Disciples *Luk.* 22. 35. " when I sent you without " purse and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? " and they said nothing: why? many truely of the Saints and servants of God in these times, who cannot boast of much wealth, yet do not speak of want: many wonder how they live and yet they are both living and Life-like. And for one, I shall say that first and last, once and again, God hath cast my lot more to satisfaction, than I could have chosen with most deliberation, hereby teaching me that which I have taken for my Lesson, and till I can say it perfectly by his grace, I shall still be learning *to choose nothing for my self*: and though I shall not say with *Leah Gen.* 30. 18. *God hath given me my hire*, yet I may be excused to think that *God hath given me a hire*; for albeit *Moses's respect to the recompence of reward* Heb. 11. 26. and it may be not that either, but rather a free love and respect to the name of God, (hallowed be that great and precious Name) *Rev.* 2, 3, give the chief determination in all an upright Mans most serious

ious deliberations; nor would he (as he shall not) be reckoned with those men *Math.* 6. 2. *who have their reward*; yet my present satisfaction with my condition outvyeth, till it is envyed of, the lot of those who have sought a fortune by moe turnes: Let Ravens hunt, and catch, and rugg, and Prey, and croack over what they have gotten, and cry from more, I judge him happy.

----------Cui Deus obtulit
Parcâ quod satis est manu.

That hath enough and finds no want
Tho his allowance be but scant.

And I have learned 2 *Kings* 5. 26. "that this is "not a time to receive Money, and to receive Gar-"ments, and olive-yards, and vineyards, and sheep, "and oxen, and men servants, and maid servants: I fear something worse than the Leprosie of *Naaman* cleave to the *Gehazi's* of this time. If God will give me my life for a prey, in all places whither I go, by his grace I shall not seek great things for my self: for I fear he will bring evil upon all flesh, "and "will break down what he hath built, and pluck "up what he hath planted, even the whole land. *Jer.* 45. 4, 5. I love *tacitus pasci* a morsel, be it of green herbs, with quietness: and I hope I have learned *Philip.* 4. 11. *in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.* Yea and I am the more content, that I find my case somewhat common in the time. To confirme it I give you a story. A vapouring *Time-divine* who hath changed his gang twice already, and possessed two honest mens Churches, one after another, seeking a fatter Pasture, lately met

met accidentally with an honest deprived Minister of his old acquaintance, and seeing him in case better than wont, asked confidently; ha sir, how is it that you look so well upon it, in this World? The other, a Notable Man, gave him a Notable Answer: "*why, thus it comes*, said he, *we go in God's common. Gods common is better pasture than the Worlds inclosure: and what wonder if we who go in Gods common, look better on't than you who go in the Devils inclosure.* At this the petulant man kept silence, and iniquity stopt her mouth. I Remember it is said *Psal.* 112. 10 *the wicked shall see it*, (that which befalls the righteous to his satisfaction and honour) *and be grieved, he shall gnash his teeth and melt away: the desires of the wicked shall perish.* Now as we would by faith take God for all things els in the Wilderness; so in the case of fainting and weariness, which as I shewed in the description, is the last and not the least evil of a Wilderness-condition, we would take him for our strength, Psal. 48. 5. *Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee* Psal. 73. 26. *my flesh and heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart:* Cant. 8. 5. "The "Church coming up out of the Wilderness, lean-"eth upon her beloved: *Isai.* 12, 2, The Lord *Je-"hovah* is my strength and my song: *Isai.* 33. 2. be "thou their arm every morning: *Haback.* 3. 19. "the Lord God is my strength, and he will make "my feet like hindes feet, and he will make me to "walk upon my high places: to the chief singer "on my stringed instruments: if strength quite fail, and be exhausted, he makes the *weary to renew their strength*

strength: if strength be weak, and the Soul drives heavily, and comes up with a slow pace in Duty; *then he shall run*: if when they winn to that, they fear it shall not last, nor they be able to continue at that rate; *then they run and weary not, they walk and do not faint. Isai.* 40. 31.

10. And lastly, In the Wilderness we would long and haste much to be through; and press with importunity for a delivery: This we see in *David. Psal.* 42. *Psal.* 63. *Psal.* 84. and *Psal.* 107. 6. those who wandered in a Wilderness cryed unto the *Lord* in their trouble. And *Moses* who had been long in the Wilderness was very earnest to have gone over *Jordan*, to see the good Land, though for his fault at *Meribah* it was denyed him. *Deut.* 3. 25. 26. This direction is nothing so strange, as is the disposition of those to whom it is meant: For I begin to observe many who have seen the Lords Glory and Power in the Sanctuary, but too modest, not to say worse (be it from despondency, or from some worse quality) in their Suits for a restoration of these Mercies: Either the length of our affliction hath put us so far out of memory, or the deepth of it hath put us so far out of hope of better dayes, that as if there had never been, nor never should be better dayes, we content our selves with the present. Truly it astonishes me to see such a Spirit of slackness possess many; as if the Lord had said to us, *Jer.* 29. 5, 6, 7, 10. "Build ye houses and dwell in them, *&c.* "For thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years "be accomplished in *Babylon*, will I visit you, and

"form my good word towards you, in causing "you to return to this place: Our disposition looks like those that were to have a seventy years affliction and long continued Captivity. And indeed considering *Daniel* 9. 13. *All this evil is come upon us, yet made we not our Prayer before the Lord our God*, &c. I observe, that Security and a slack disposition is the attendent, or rather the presage and fore-runner of a continued Affliction: And by the contrary a Spirit of restless importunity, is a comfortable Prognostick of a speedy delivery: See it confirmed in the instances of *Daniel*, *Nehemiah*, *Ezra*, who upon the very point of the deliverance were stirred up, and with themselves stirred up the People by Prayer and Fasting to ask Mercies of their God. Take then the direction *Isa.* 62. 6, 7. *Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make* Jerusalem *a praise in the Earth.*

And thus with patience I have got through the Wilderness, and considered the intimation of the Churches condition, which is the second thing in the words of the *Verse*. In conclusion, be it minded only, that all that hath been said to this point, doth alike concern the Church in general and Saints in particular: For neither I nor any other, who from this mount of contemplation do view the Wilderness at a distance, can expect to have it said to us, as was said to *Moses* of the Land beyond *Jordan*, *Thou shalt not go over into it*: but rather as was said to *Abraham*: *All the Land which thou seest shall be thine*: *Arise and walk through the*

the Land, for to thee will I give it. Not to speak 39
what we have had, or at the time have, none of us can promise in the Life of our Vanity, that we shall not have, if not at once, yet successively, one after another, all the described parts of the Wilness for our Lot.

I will allure her.

THe third thing in the words is, The *Lords* Design, *I will allure her.* Hence the Doctrine is, That the *Lords* great Design in the vicissitudes of all Dispensations to his People, is to gain them to himself; that he may have more of their Kindness and Service. The point is confirmed; 1. From the account Scripture gives of Gods various Dispensations to his People: Take but this *Chapter* for an instance; he both afflicts her and comforts her, and all that he may have her heart. 2. From the first and greatest Command in the Law of God, which is, *That we love him with all our Heart,* &c. As the Law is understood to be the mind of the King; so the greatest Command of God is the surest Evidence of his Will concerning this, *That we abide only for him, and do not play the Harlot, nor be for another man,* Chap. 3. 3. It is easie courting where we may command: And in this the *Lord* hath the advantage of all other Lovers: The Soveraigni-

of his Propriety in us, bears him to challenge our Heart and Service, without once asking our consent, and to resent every repulse and refusal, not simply as a displeasure, but really as a wrong, in defrauding him of what is his own, by a just Title of many respects, antecedent to our voluntary consent. 3. The *Lords* design is so manifest in his kind way with his People, that as it cannot be hidden, so it seems he would have it known, that every one may think him a Suter: Even as when a man frequents the House of his Beloved; presently, by his frequency and other circumstances of his Carriage, the meanest Servant of the House discovers his design: Yea, and the Lord is not ashamed here expressly to tell his Errand, *I will allure her.* Some men if they intend a match with, and have a design upon a person, they set their designs abroad; either in Policy to further them, and thereby to know how the person intertains such Reports, that accordingly they may behave themselves in their intended Address; or else in vain Glory to vaunt of them: So the *Lord* causes the Report so loud of his blessed purpose, that it may be seen he is both serious in the matter and glorious of it, to have sinners love him. Now the *Lord* allures either Morally and Externally, or Internally and effectually. Morally and Externally, while he courts Souls with Arguments and Motives fit to take with rational and ingenuous Spirits. Effectually and Internally, when by the Power of Grace he makes such fit Motives and Arguments have their

due

due weight and work upon Hearts. According to this division, for explication of this Blessed Design of the *Lords* alluring his People, I shall *first* touch upon some of the chief Motives that are fitted to this purpose, (for to reach them all I presume not) *2dly*, I shall treat of the inward Power of Grace, that makes these Motives effectual upon the Soul. And *3dly*, shall conclude the point with Use.

1. Of motives, the *first* is his own Glorious Excellency outshining every shadow of likness, let be equality: *Who is a God like unto thee*? And that I am now upon a love designe, and upon the imployment of *Eleazer Abrahams* servant *Gen.* 24. to seek a Wife to my Masters Son, I am concerned as a Friend of the Bridgroome to express my self in the proper termes of such a Subject: And "O that "my heart could indite good matter, that I might "speak the things that I have made concerning the "King! Let it then be condescended, what is required, by any but willing to be satisfied, to commend a person to the heart of his beloved, and in him you have it. 1. for his Dignity and Descent, *he is the King, and the Kings son*: 2. For his Induements, "in him are hidd all the treasures of wis-"dom and knowledge: yea and *he is full of grace and truth*: and if you speak of a Spirit, a great Spirit, *Isai.* 11. 2. 3. "the spirit of the Lord resteth "upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understand-"ing, the spirit of Counsel and might, the spirit "of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, and "shall make him of quick understanding in the

"fear of the Lord &c. 3. For his Beauty, *he is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand, and fairer than the sons of men.* 4. For his Disposition and Humour, he is tender, compassionat, loving, meek, condescending, kind and Gracious: O but the Soul may have many a good day, and much sweet contentment in his Company! 5. For his Estate and Fortune, "he is the possessor of Heaven "and earth, the heir of all things; and there is no lack to those that have him, and they have him that love him. 6. For his Use and Vertue, *he is all, and in all,* and in him we are compleat: 7. For his Necessity, he is the person that cannot be wanted, by any that would be happy: *Deut.* 30. 20. *he is thy life, and the length of thy days.* And if any think they may do as well elsewhere, let them answer the question *John* 6. 68. *Lord to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal Life.* "Now this is my beloved, and this is my friend, O Daughters of *Jerusalem. Cant.* 5. 16.

The *Lords second* Motive and external allurement is his Words: Words are very charming and enticeing things: and *how forceable are right words?* says *Job.* Hence the *Latines* wisely give the name of *verba dare,* to that which the Court calls a complement, but the Countrey plainly calls *a Cheat.* Hence the way of Fishing which catcheth by the Ear, applauded of the greatest Wits, approven and much practised by Lovers, the most ingenious because the most serious Anglers, who busk their hooks with words, and bait with the artificial flee of Complements. Hence, as the world goes, he is the

the fineſt man that can ſay faireſt to it: and albeit *Solomon* both a Wiſe Man and a great Preacher and Spokes-man hath ſaid *Proverb*, 17. 28. *even a fool when he holdeth his peace is counted wiſe*; yet with moſt men, even a wiſe man, if he hold his peace, is counted a fool: But the truth is, *multum ille aſſecutus eſt qui bene didicit loqui, bene qui tacere non minus aſſecutus eſt*, "he hath attained much "who hath learned to ſpeak well: and he hath "attained no leſs who hath learned to hold his "peace well. But to ſay no more in general of the allurements of Words: how ſpecially excellent are the words of the Lord to the purpoſe of Soul-converting and heart-alluring? *Zach.* 1. 13. *They are good words and comfortable words*, Jer. 15. 16. *Thy words were found and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me, the joy and rejoycing of mine Heart.* Gold and Treaſure is alluring unto any, Honey and Apples to Delicate Perſons: And if it were even the mortal forbidden Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil; yet if it be good for Food, and Pleaſant to the Eyes, and a Tree to be deſired, it muſt be had, if the price ſhould be Death, *Gen.* 3. But *the words of God are more to be deſired than Gold; ſweeter alſo than Honey and the Honey comb*, Pſal. 19. 10. Pſal. 119. 72, 103. *verſes.* If nature could propine the World with Golden Apples as a preſent of her firſt Fruits, ſure thoſe would raviſh the Hearts of the greateſt Potentates, and would raiſe Wars among Princes for the poſſeſſion and keeping of the Tree that bare thoſe, they would be ἔριδος μῆλα *Apples of Striſe*, properly and in-

deed: And the Words of God, which are the Flower and first Fruits of all fit Words, are *Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver*, Prov. 25, 11. They Nourish Solidly, Comfort Cordially, and Inrich Mightily. How charming the *Lords* Words are, we have famous instances in the Gospel, that with his Words he catched those, that were sent and intended to catch and entrap him: he sent them back with this Report, *never man spoke like this man.* And here in the *Text* it self, *I will allure her*, saith the Lord, *and I will speak comfortably unto her.*

The *third* chief Motive and Allurement is, The Works of the *Lord* and his Doings; He hath done for his People, and is daily doing to them, that which cannot but rationally entice any ingenuous Soul to be for him: If God had not loved us, I should have wondered at every thing he does for us: Love is the chief of the wayes of God to us. God loved the World, *God so loved the World*, A Wonder indeed! But after that stupendious portent of his Works to us, *That he loved us*, I shall wonder at nothing he does for us: For what will we not do for those we Love? But again, I must wonder, that he loved us, and in this love to us, he was humbled and emptyed for us: For us he came into the World: For us *He took the likeness of sinful flesh, and the form of a servant*: For us he suffered Temptations, Crosses and Contradictions in his Life, and for us he tasted death; *He gave himself for us*: He came under the Law, and Sin, and the Wrath, and Curse of God for us: For us he drank the Cup of astonishment, which would

would have made all the Elect tremble to Eternity. Yea and he rose and was victorious over death for us: he hath also ascended Heaven for us, and there he interceeds for us: he is our Friend at Court, he stands in the way there, that nothing pass against us: and when there is hazard he warns us, and by his Word and Spirit he keeps intelligence with our Souls, and gives us daily accounts of the true state of our Spiritual business: Thence he issues daily many favours on our behalf, *Psal.* 103. 2, and forward, *Forget not all his Benefits, who forgiveth all thine Iniquities*, &c. And his negative Mercies are not the least part of what he doth for us: That he prevents and holds off us so many temptations, snares and evils that otherwise would even over-run us: and that for all these he waiteth to be gracious to us, at the voice of our Cry when he shall hear it: And in a word that he is so wholly taken up for us, as if he had nothing else to mind but us. Now to a rational ingenuous Spirit, and every one that deserves to be called a Man, all these will be *the Cords of a Man, and Bands of Love. Hos.* 11. 4. Yea there is some secret alluring quality, in the saddest and darkest of Gods dispensations to the Soul of the Saint. Hence we never find the Godly Soul more fond (so to speak) of its beloved, and more earnest upon him, than in the time of desertion, which of all dispensations is the most afflicting to such an one. If the Lord withdraw, such an one will fall down sick of Love to him; and then go tell him O ye Daughters of *Jerusalem*, that I cannot live in his absence:

absence: And if he do not come quickly skipping like a young Roe or Hart; yea, and if he take not the nearest way over the mountains of *Bether*, he may come too late, to lay his hands upon the eyes of his distressed Beloved, *Psal.* 28. 1. *If thou be silent to me* (sayes *David*) *I shall be like them that go down into the pit*: O Lord, I cannot live, I value not Life, if thou be not the God of my Life: I have resolved I shall never be glad, till thou be the health of my Countenance, and make me glad with thy Works: For I see little difference, betwixt Sorrow and Joy, if thou be not my chiefest Joy. And in our *Text*, the Wilderness is the alluring place to this ungracious froward Church.

The fourth chief Motive wherewith the Lord allures his People, is, his Gifts. Gifts and tokens use to pass betwixt Lovers, and accordingly in this *Chapter*, the Lord allures this whoorish Church with Gifts: So *verse* 15. *I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope.* A Gift is a tempting and inticing thing: and therefore the Lord hath forbid *Judges* the taking of Gifts; For "a Gift blinds the Eyes "of the Wise, and perverts the words of the Righteous: And therefore *Isa* 33. 15. He is a rare man, *That can shake his Hands from holding Bribes*. And the more strange it is that men can take so largely from God, and not be thereby enticed after him. *Solomon* sayes, *A mans gift make room for him*, and whithersoever it turneth it self, it is so prosperous, that *Every one is a Friend to him that giveth Gifts*, Prov. 18. 16. and 19. 6, But let us consider

sider Gods Gifts: His Gifts are 1. *Free* Gifts: And what is freer than a Gift? For if it were not free, it were not a Gift: None of us can earn the least benefit at Gods hand; For "who hath "given to the Lord, and it shall be recompensed "to him again? But of him, and through him, "and for him are all things, to whom be Glory for ever, *Rom.* 11. 35. 36. 2. His Gifts are *good gifts*, he is the giver of all good; and "from him "every good and perfect gift descendeth, he will "with-hold no good from him that walketh uprightly. I confess, *That sore evil under the Sun*, Eccles. 5. 13. may be seen in all other Gifts as well as *Riches*, That they are often *keeped for the Owners thereof to their hurt.* But God never gave men that Gift, (they have it of the *Evil One*) by abuse to turn good Gifts into evil for themselves. 3. His Gifts are Rich and rare Gifts, *Grace and Glory, and every good thing*: yea himself: For the Covenant Gift, is, *I will be their God*: yea our Selves and our Souls, *He gives Life and Breath*, Act. 17. 25. Jer. 38. 16. *He gave us this Soul.* 4. His Gifts are large Gifts, *Act.* 17. 25. *He gives all things*, and 1 *Cor*, 4. 7. *What hast thou that thou didst not receive?* And here I observe, what a great advantage in his alluring us the Lord hath of us all, by his Gifts. If we possess and keep still his Gifts, we cannot handsomly refuse his sute for our kindness and service, for no ingenuous Woman will possess or retain that man's Gift whom she minds not to entertain. But if any should presume disdainfully to return the Lords Tokens to him, and to send

back

back his Gifts; then he hath yet the greater advantage: For if we send back all his Gifts, and return all to him that ever we had of him, then must we needs with all send back and return our selves, and our Souls, and all that we are, or have, or can: For he gave all these; and he requires no more than what he gave. So that of necessity we must either be all for God, or we must be nothing; or else we must be most base in being any thing that we are not for God, and in retaining his Tokens, when we have rejected himself. And now let wild ungracious sinners, look how they shall come handsomly off: And this I would recommend, especially to such as claim to more of a Spirit and Breeding than ordinary: if there be any Gallantry, here is the opportunity to *shew themselves men.* 5. His Gifts are frequently renewed-or rather continually heaped Gifts, *He loadeth us, daily with his Benefits*: He is still giving and daily sending variety of Rare Mercies, and he is still heaping Benefits upon us; and these (if we intertain the Giver, and give him our Consent) we are to take as tokens for good, and an earnest of greater things to be enjoyed; For *the Valley of* Achor *is a door of hope.*

The Fifth chief Motive, wherewith the Lord allures his People, is, his Carriage and Demeanor towards them. A goodly Deportment, a quaint Behaviour with an obliging Carriage is very taking. *Davia*'s and *Daniel*'s Behaviours did much to allay, if not to vanquish the fury and malignity of their malicious Enemies. The Carriage of *Titus Vespasian* the *Emperour* was such, that thereby he

he was, and was called *deliciæ generis humani*, the darling of mankind. But, O, how transporting is the Lords way and Carriage towards his People! Secular Lovers use to frame their Carriage, as well as their Cloathes, into the best fashion and dress, and they study to make their entries μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας with all their Sailes up; and would seem to be rather what they should be, then what they are, and indeed be: They put on their best Behaviour with their best Sute, only at Shows and Solemnities; for as they do not wear their best Cloaths, so neither practice they the best Manners, always at home. But as the Lords Carriage to his People, is alluring, at his first appearing, and in his first address to their Souls; so they may expect to have it always the same: For *He is God and changes not*, and all that is but his ordinary. But behold his Carriage, I pray you; with much Patience he waits upon his Peoples consent, as if their Love were worth the waiting upon; and indeed if it be not so, it is enough that he account it so; in much mercy he overlooks many faults in them, and puts the best construction upon many of their unhandsome and unkind Actions: In much kindness he makes them many a visit: With much earnestness he invites them, with much respect he intreats them, calling them by all their best names, in discretion fitting their Titles to his design. In much condescendence and tenderness he complyes with them, and applyes himself to them, and all this he doth so equally, constantly and faithfully, that they must say,

say, if they be ingenuous, that *all his wayes to them are Mercy and Truth*: And for all this he is content so far to condescend, as to submit himself to their reasonable and impartial Censure: O *Israel* what iniquity hast thou found in me, and *wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me*, Micah. 6. 3. Surely, if ever I did any thing below my self, it was in matching with thee. If I had insisted upon particulars in this, and the Motives already mentioned, where had my rest been? But of Gods Carriage and Way with his People this is the sum, that *it is not the manner of Men.* And I think the Lords ravishing conversation with his People, would easily pass into Admiration with him, who professed (*Prov.* 30 19.) that he could not know matters much more easie. O that the secular Courtier might, after many changes of shapes and fashions, at last be turned into a *Seraphick lover*! And that the ingine and wit which is thrown (where it evanishes) into the Air of vanity, were employed to court the Uncreated Beauty of that ever blooming flower of Eternity.

The Sixth chief Motive wherewith the Lord allures his People, is, the Example of others, who have led them the way in loving, choosing and commending him. Example is an alluring thing: And the World is more ruled by Example than by Law. Example oft-times usurps upon Reason; sometimes it agrees with her; but seldom is it subject to Her. And thus while men ask rather *quid fit*, what is done, nor, *quid fieri debet*, what ought to be done, *Many follow the broad way that leadeth*

leadeth to destruction, while but *few do find the narrow that leadeth to Life*, Many choose rather to go to Hell in company, than to go to Heaven alone. But in Religion and in Travel, I would hold the rule, to choose day Light rather than Company: Nor would I willingly wait for any man till Night, who in the dark, Might lead or mislead me whither he would. If once a man turn his eye off the fixed Light of Scripture, the wandering Star of Example may lead him whither he knows not, and lodge him where he would not. Now how the Lord allures his People by Example, see *Cant.* 1. 3, 4. There the Church finds others before her, whom she would gladly follow: *The Virgins love thee, draw me, we will run after thee*; Lord I love good company well, and therefore let us all go together. And as she finds good Example before her, she leaves the like after her, that allures others to follow her, as she had followed others, *Cant.* ch 5, and 6. *Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among Women, whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee*: And all this by the Lords direction, *chap.* 1. 8. *Go forth by the footsteps of the flock.* O that God would raise up many Lights of Religion in this dark Generation! Many who might be exemplary in Piety, who might go before others, *as the hee-goats before the flock*, Jer. 50. 8. O that God would perform more in our days, that which he hath promised of old. Zach. 8. 21. *the inhabitants of one City shall go to another, saying, let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the*

Lord

Lord of hosts; I will go also. Mean time, let us follow the Examples we have, and that the Example of those who have chosen and owned the Lord and his way, may be the more alluring to us, Consider 1. that many of them were Kings and Great Men: Religion and the strictness of Godliness is too far above every man, to be below any man: I fear those who think Godliness below them, find it too far above them. *Prov.* 24. 7. *wisdom is too high for a fool.* 2. Many of them were Wise men. Let our Sages, Senators, and our Counsellours remember this: and if they say, there are few Godly men Wise, I can say to them, there are as few Wise men Gody and chosen to obtain mercy, 1 *Cor.* 1. 26. *not many wise men after the flesh are called and chosen.* But truely, till the Cabin Councils of secular heads, and the Conclaves of the Clergy find me amongst them all, four men whom they will undertake to match for wisdom with *Moses*, *Joseph*, *Solomon*, and *Daniel*, I cannot but think, that Godliness doth as well become a Wise Man, as Wisdom doth a Godly man: withal consider, that Godliness and Wisdome are one in Scripture. 3. All of them were Righteous and truely Holy Men, strange it is that so many should choose to be wicked, whilst none can endure to seem or to be called such, and who but the worst man takes it worst to be told of his faults? And as strange it is, that every one should choose to seem and to be called Righteous and Good, whilst so few do choose indeed to be such. But is it not as much the Glory of true Godliness, that Hypo-

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crits and Prophane Persons love to go in its Livery, and to be called by its name, as it is their reproach to have or hold *the forme of Godlines, whilst they deny the power thereof?* 4. They were Impartial and Unintereſſed men, that (except upon Heaven) could not with the leaſt colour be ſuſpect of any deſigne in their doings: yea did they not renounce and go croſs to all Worldly intereſts of nature, Education, Credit, Profit, Pleaſure and the like? 5. They were Reſolute and Conſtant in what they did. Indeed if the Saints had Repented their choice, they might have renounced Religion when they pleaſed, as is ſaid of the *Patriarchs.* Heb. 11. 15. *that if they had been mindful of that Countrey, from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned, but now they deſire a better Countrey, that is an heavenly.* I ſhould think it a poor office to perſwade men to that which might repent them: but if they, whoſe example I commend, and whoſe Practiſe gladly I would perſwade, did with Conſtancy and Confidence, without Relenting, go thorow and paſs the difficulties of the flatterings and Frownings, the Fears and Hopes, the Threats and Intreaties of a preſent World, may I not conclude, that Godlineſs is that which is not to be Repented of?

It now follows to treat of the inward power of Grace, which maketh theſe external motives, effectual upon the Soul. If any ſhould attempt by force to ſtorme the Soul of man; it is ſo ſure to be razed to the ground, and brought utterly down to nothing before it yeeld (for *voluntas non poteſt cogi,*

the will, which is the Fort Royal of the Soul, cannot be forced) that the Assailant may resolve to loss it, before he win it, and to win only the expensive loss of all his labour, and to triumph ridiculously over *a nothing*: for nature and invention have made the Soul a strength impregnable and unaccessable to any power without: and all attempts thence, may certainly prove ineffectual, except a ready course be taken, to gain a correspondency with these within. Also sinners are naturally very shie and ill to be courted: But the Lord as he is good at all that is good, is excellently good at courting and allureing an untoward heart. Others, it may be, have got from her at once, their leave, with a repulse: yea my servants in my name, have possibly been so served: but, wild as she is, I will not leave her so: *I* will speak to her my self, and I'le ingage, I shall quickly cause her say yea: *therefore behold I will allure her*, he can but say to a Soul, *follow me*, and *it leaves all and follows him*: he can catch a sinners heart from him ere ever he is aware. *Jer.*20.7. *O Lord, thou hast deceaved me, and I was deceaved, thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed.* He can mix a Love-cup to the Soul, that shall cause it speak of him when he is gone, and follow him faster than ever it fled from him, and that even when he seems to flee: *we remember thy Love more than wine, the virgins love thee; draw me, we will run after thee* Cant. 1. 2, 3, 4. yea more, he can make an ointment, the very savour whereof shall cause sinners love him: *because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured*

red out, therefore do the virgins love thee; yea he can give a Soul-charming vertue, to the very words of his name; and cause the very naming of him, kindle a flame of love in the Soul, that many waters cannot quench: *thy name is as ointment that is powred forth.* He can open with his finger the fastest lock that is upon the heart of any sinner. *Cant.* 5. 4. *my beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, my bowels were moved for him:* and if it do not open freely, he can drop a litle mirrhe from his finger upon it, that shall make it easy: *I rose up to open to my beloved, and my fingers droped myrrhe, verse* 5 and 6. yea without once asking liberty, he can ravish a sinners heart: and when ever he comes upon such a design, he coms rideing in *King Solomons Chariot, the midst whereof is paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem* Cant. 3. 9. 10. and after the Kings Chariot, follows a large train, the Chariots of *Aminadab*, waiting to convoy and bring up his willing people, *Cant.* 6. 12. and if once the soul is got up into the Chariot, the King bids drive, in the 13 *verse, return, return O Shulamite, return, return*; and then farewell thy Fathers house. *Psal.* 45. 10. *forget thine own people and thy fathers house.* Now the Chariots of *Aminadab*, the Chariots of the Lords willing People, run upon these four wheels. In plain termes, the inward power of Grace, whereby the Lord allures sinners, and gains them to himself, consisteth and is carryed on of these Four.

1. A sound and clear Information of the understanding, and Illumination of the mind: as *it is written in the Prophets, and they shall be all taught of*

God. John 6. 45. out of *Isai.* 54. 13. with *Jer.* 24. 7. *and I will give them an heart to know me.* 1 John. 5. 20. *he hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true.* If a man by nature and study were never so judicious and learned, yet ere he be converted and effectuallyallured, to ingage throughly in Covenant with God, he hath need to be taught of God, *that the eyes of his understanding being opened, he may know that which passes knowledge*; Otherways, it may seem a strange saying: but it is that which is noted in the Scripture of truth; and the Scripture expressions of *opening the eyes*, *giving an understanding*, and the like, make it clear, That the meanest Saint and convert hath more knowledge of *Christ*, and seeth somewhat in him, that the most Subtile, Seraphick, Resolute, or Angelick Doctor unconverted cannot see. So that whatever differences there be betwixt Saving and Common knowledge, there is certainly a difference even in regard of the intensive degree of clearness: or if it be not so, let any man tell me what such expressions mean, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6, *that God who commandeth the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light* of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ: and *verse*, 3 and 4 *the Gospel is hid from those that perish, for Satan hath blinded their mindes*; and no doubt, many of these had more natural judgment, and learning, with more of the means also, than some of those that believed. To conclude, there is greater odds betwixt a Saint and a *Rabbi*, than betwixt a *Rabbi* and an Idiot: for the last two (I now suppose them

them unconverted) are neighboured in Nature; but Grace separats the first from them both.

2. The inward power of Grace consisteth in a powerful inflection and Bowing of the *Will. Psal.* 110. 3. *thy People shall be willing in the day of thy power:* the Lord findeth sinners *Unwilling*, he worketh on them *not willing* and he makes them *Willing*. The Will (as I said before) is the strongest hold of the Soul, and the most wilful piece of the man: command the Will and you command the man: the New Will (say Divines) is the New Man; and therefore the Lord is concerned to possess the Will: and this he doth wherever he savingly allures a Soul: for he scorns any should say, that they serve and follow him against their will, all his Souldiers are *Volunteers*: *his People are a Willing People.* I find a Godly Man once saying (and all such must say it often) *the good which I would that I do not.* Even as by Conversion, oft times the greatest sinner becomes the greatest Saint; so the Will, before Conversion, the most obstinate and unplacable enemy, doth afterward become the most kind and trusty friend to God: for in the midst of many exorbitancies of affections, and irregularities of Practice, and Conversation, the Will retains its loyalty, and persists in its duty to the *Lord*: and when the whole Soul is in an uproar, and confusion, like that of the City of *Ephesus Act.* 19. 32. (a most lively Representation of a Soul in Perturbation) wherein "some cryed one thing, "some another, for the Assembly was confused, "and the more part knew not wherefore they were

"come together: All this while the Will is as ready to protest for the *Lord*, as the superstitious *Ephesians* were for their *Diana*. And when in a disorder, all plead liberty, *I consent unto the Law* (says the will) *Rom*, 7. 16 and 25 *with the mind I serve the Law of God.*

3. The inward power of Grace consists in a sweet Inclination of the *Affections Deut.* 30. 6. *The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy Soul.* The *Psalmist* Prayes *Psal.* 119. 36. *incline mine heart unto thy testimonys*, and Psal. 141. 4. *incline not mine heart to any evil thing.* The Affections are ticklish things: By much working and subduing, with frequent turnings, they become as ductile and formable as the potters clay, whereof he makes a vessel as it pleases him. Like those we call *Good Natures*, they are sweet Companions, but not so sure: And as readily you do not leave them, as you found them; so you shall hardly find them where you left them; nor know you when you have them, or when you want them: They are *primi occupantis*, they can refuse no body: They welcome all comers, follow all Counsels, comply with all Companies: And in a word they are compleat Conformists: And they are courted by so many Lovers, that it is much if they turn not common strumpets, to the dishonour and grief of this concerned chaste Suter, *Who is broken with such whorish Hearts*, Ezek. 6. 9. Again, they are like an Instrument with many Strings, they make sweet Melody in Gods

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Service, but with the least wrong touch, you Mis-tune them. Indeed the Saints have their affections frequently to Tune, and it requires a time to do it: This causes that the Affection of Grief, which is the *Basse* of the Soul, is oftest in Tune, and keeps in Tune longest with the Saints, *Psal.* 57. 7, 8. When *David's Heart was fixed*, his Harp was out of Tune: when his Faith had got footing, his Affections were to seek. The Case is common and too well known to the People of God: In Preaching, Hearing, Reading, Meditating, Praying, Praising, or any other Duty of our Life, the Affections oft times do not answer. But Grace hath a skilful hand, and is a Musician so expert, that if the *Teror* of the *Will* be but well set, and the *Base* of Godly *sorrow* record well, ordinary failings in the other parts, shall not be much discerned.

4. The inward power of Grace making outward Motives effectual, consists in a Cheerful, Ready Motion of the *Locomotives*, and an actual up-stiring of all that is in a man, by an Act Elicitive of the Imperated Acts of the Understanding, Will, and Affections: So the Schools express it: But to speak plainly, it is Grace causing us to perform indeed and with our Hand, that which it hath caused us to know, will, and Love with our Heart: For sayes the *Apostle*, *It is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his good Pleasure*, Philip. 1. 13. And if Grace assist not in this, as well as in the rest, this, *to do*, may make much adoe, and cause even an Apostolick Spirit have a

hard pull of Duty, *Rom.* 7. 18. *To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not.* And by this their defectiveness and short coming in the point of *doing*, the best of Saints may be convinced, that of themselves, they fall as far short in the other points; and that if they cannot go the least step without *Christ*'s hand holding them up, they could far less have walked the whole length of their Duty: The *Apostle*'s inference is remarkable to the purpose: *I know*, sayes he, *that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing, for to perform that which is good I find not, albeit that to will is present with me.* So that he who of himself cannot do, neither of himself can he know, will or love that which is good. Fail in one, fail in all. This consideration of it self, may refute the whole and half *Pelagian*, *Popish*, *Lutheran*, *and Arminian* Crotchets in the point of Grace. And this shortly is the method of Graces work Converting a Soul, and alluring a Sinners heart. The Understanding sayes, Gods will is true, the Will sayes it is good, the Affections say it is sweet, the Practice and whole Man sayes it is done. *Thy will be done*; and if it be thy will to save me, and have me to thy self, then *Lord, I am thine, save me; for I seek thy Precepts*, Psal. 119. 94. But in the Natural Birth, we know not how the Bones do grow in the Womb of her that is with Child; far less can we reach to Perfection the Mystery of Regeneration: and if we know not the time when the wild Goats of the Rock bring forth, nor can mark when the

Hindes

Hindes do Calve, how shall we be able to Cast the Nativity of the Sons of God? For *John* 3. 8. *The Wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: So is every one that is born of the Spirit.* If we *know not the way of a man with a maid*, Prov. 30. 19. how short may we well be judged to have come in our Accounts of the Lords method of courting and making Love to the Souls of his People; and yet we are instructed from the Word of God, to give of all these, an account sufficient to Salvation, with all necessary instruction and comfort. And the like account the Saints are to expect from the Spirit of God, which searcheth all things, even the very *deep things* of God, 1 *Cor.* 2. 10.

The Use of this point *I* dispatch in these few words of Instruction. 1. We are taught from this, that sinners naturally are very untoward and untractable, to that which is good: they must be allured, enticed, and as it were beguiled and deceaved unto that which is equally there Duty and Mercy; *Jer.* 20. 7. *O Lord thou hast deceaved me, and I was deceaved.* 2 Cor. 12. 16. The *Apostle*, who was as a deceaver and yet true, *being crafty, caught the* Corinthians *with guile.* It is indeed a *pia fraus* a Godly beguile, to beguile a Soul to Heaven and to God: I wish moe were thus beguiled, and that many such deceavers may enter into the World: nor can I say in this deceit, whether the deceiver is the Honester Man, or the deceived the Happier.

2. This

2. This teacheth Ministers the Art of Preaching, They must be both serious and dexterous: as friends of the Bridgroom, and Ambassadors for Christ, they must be so well acquaint with the laws of love, as to be able (a Divine blessing concurring) to allure the wildest and most froward Soul. A Minister would be a Seraphick lover, one of the order of *Peter*: Peter, *lovest thou me?* Lord *thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.* Peter, *feed my lambes*, feed my sheep. If our way with sinners, be not the most taken way, let it be the most taking way, and so we shall not mistake the way. Many Ministers are but cold Suters for Christ, and why? they are troubled with an error of the first concoction, they erre concerning the end: they seek their own things, and not the things of Christ, they serve not our Lord Jesus, but there own belly: they eat the fat, and cloath themselves with the wooll, but they feed not the flock: put them to tryal, and it will be found they cannot read the Bible: they lisp like the men of *Ephraim*, for *Shibboleth*, they say *Sibboleth*; give them but to read that short text 2 *Cor.* 12. 14. they read it, I seek not *you*, but *yours*; and if they read right, I seek not *Yours* but *You*, they are the greatest of lyars. In a word, they are like many in our days (and those are even like them) who court the fortune more than the person: in this age, a rich man needs not want Children; let him make Images of his Silver, and these shall not want matches, such who for their generosity deserve, as often they get, the reward of a silver cru-

crucifix. But as he that findeth a wife, though he find her in her shirt, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord, *Prov*, 18. 22. So he that winneth Souls, though he win not a penny with them, is wise. *Prov.* 11. 30. Truely the alluring way of preaching is *ars longa*, a thing not soon learned, but where God doth give the tongue of the learned. This art hath many precepts, which I am fitter to be taught, than to teach: and till God send the time of teaching, I take this for the time of learning: who are these that come up from the Wilderness, both better men and better Ministers?

3. We see this in the point, That *Religion is an alluring thing*. It deservs to be written in Gold: Lord write it upon my heart: it hath that in it which may abundantly endear it to any free Soul. Some who could stand before an armed enemy, have fallen before a naked beauty, Let *Sampson* and *David* be witnesses in the case: sawest thou ever the beauty of the Lord? for how great is his Beauty? and how great is his Goodness? sawest thou ever the beauty of Holiness? a beauty as rare as Rich, a singular beauty! a beauty Active and Communicative, it makes all those beautiful that enjoy it: it is not so with the Richest Worldly beauty: an unbeautiful Husband may have a beautiful Wife, whose beauty cannot make him comly: none truely love and espouse Religion but it makes them comly with its beauty. O how would such a beauty be courted in the World? hast thou not the pourtrait of this beauty in thine heart

heart, the Chamber of her that conceaved thee? I should hold my self everlastingly obliged to him that would give me a well done coppy: and though I did not like it, for him that did it, yet would I love it for them that it is like. And if this my discourse for linage and liknes could say unto God, thou art my Father, and to Religion and Godliness, thou art my Mother and my Sister, The Piety of my vanity, might excuse the vanity of my Piety, to boast of my Relation to that lovly Family, that brings forth all beauties. I have seen the Heathen *Venus* their Godels of love and beauty, painted with a flaming heart in her hand, (a pretty embleme of that Scripture *Hos.* 4. 11. Whoredome taketh away the heart) beauty maketh daily triumphs with mens hearts, as the Garlands of her victories or the spoiles of her captives, who are no enemies: for amongst the many (as there are many) singularities of feminine victories, these are not the least, that Men conquer none but enemies, Women none but friends. Men take captives against their will, womens captives are all consenters to their own bonds, nor do they once desire to make their escape. Men punish their captives with pain, Women please theirs with torment, and torment them with pleasure. But O canst thou behold the beauty of Holiness, and have thy heart at command? Needs must the lively truth of Godliness be very desirable, when a lying shew and dead picture of it is so lovely, *Mark.* 10. 21. Jesus beholding the young man loved him, for the appearance of good he saw

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in him. How transporting must true Godliness be in the Abstract? and is not the profection of Piety, the perfection of beauty? since in the concrete and in its imperfection it is so ravishing *Cant.* 4 9. the Church with one of her eyes ravishes Christs heart, a cheek-view, a glance and half a look of a Saint is very alluring. But what if both her eyes be to him? then as one wounded, he cryes, *Chap.* 6 5. *turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me.* He falls before his friends, who rose over all his enemies: the Saints beauty overcoms him that overcame the World, it captivateth him that led captivity captive, it triumpheth over him who triumphed over Principalities and Powers, it conquers him who conquered death: for love is strong as death: Set death in the way of love, it can despise and go over it. If jealousie dispute Christs love, he is ready to vindicate himself upon the highest adventure: tell me (says he) what token shall I give thee? what shall *I* do for thee? If thou lovest me, thou must die for me. O jealousie cruel as the Grave! I love thee, and will wash thee in mine own Blood: I love thee, and will give my self for thee: O love strong as Death! O death-conquering Christ! O Christ-conquering Love! O Love-conquering Beauty of Holiness! Look upon Holiness, let thine eyes but observe her wayes: Love her, and give unto her a present of what thou hast. But what is thy Petition, O Queen? and it shall be granted thee? what is thy request, and it shall be performed? If I have found favour in thy sight, O friend,

and

and if I please thee, then give me thy Heart, *Prov.* 23, 26. *My Son give me thine heart*: her Authority might command it, her Beauty might rob it, but her Modesty and Love doth Friendly desire it.

I would not have my discourse fall in the hands of the ungodly: For wickedness proceedeth from the wicked (as saith the Proverb of the Antients, 1 *Sam.* 24. 13.) But if I were to speak to ungodly Sinners (O Lord open my closed Lips, then shall I teach Transgressours thy wayes, and Sinners shall be converted unto thee. *Psal.* 51. 13.) I would shew them, what I have yet to add, in the behalf of lovely Holiness: I would sing to my Beloved, a Song of my well Beloved. But the alluring subject, the Kindness I owe to Godliness, with the respect I have for all that love & serve her, invite me to speak, what I know: and therefore, beside all the alluring Motives to Godliness, mentioned in the Explication, I add these things to be considered, wherein she excelleth all her Companions, her Rivals, and all that would partake with her in our Affections. And I shall but point at some Heads, leaving room for the godly Soul, to enlarge in its Meditations, upon the particulars in consideration.

1. Godliness bringeth the Soul upon the greatest Interest: The interest of God, of the Soul, of the Kingdom that cannot be moved, the Crown that fadeth not away, and the things not seen that are eternal; that which eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart

Heart of man to conceive, even that which God hath laid up for those that love him, *Angustus est animus, quem terrena delectant*, They are not ill to please, who can be put off with things Wordly. But the Saint is the only person of a great Spirit, who indeed minds high things, even as he is born to great things. The Books *De natura*, or of *Nature*, are too mean a Subject for a Saint: all his Studies are *de Anima*, *de Cælo*, & *de Deo*: his Lessons are of the *Soul*, of *Heaven*, and of *God*. His ditan is τὰ ἄνω, he minds the things that are above.

2. Only Godliness hath that in it, that can maintain and advance his greatest interest. What can all the Pomp, Pleasures and Profits of the World do to a Soul? Do these things make a better man? Lay all these to a wounded Conscience, and they will be as he that taketh away a Garment in cold Weather, as Vinegar upon Nitre, or as he that singeth Songs to a heavy Heart, *Prov.* 25.20. they may make it worse, they cannot make it better. A mean subjects Rent cannot bear the Charges of a Crown, nor can all the imaginable affluence of Worldly sensual Pleasures, (the delights of the Sons of Men) fill up the Accounts of a mans Happiness. Are not all things worldly, under an Antient Curse for mans sake? And shall that which is cursed, make us Blessed? The Wisdom of *Solomon* (and who shall come after the King?) hath tryed the Experiment of all things Sublunary, that they are but vexation of Spirit, and a very Vanity: And will a man fill

his

his Belly with the East-wind? The most refined Spirits and artificial Extracts of natures fullness, hath no more fitness and congruity to satisfy a Soul, than Chaff or Sand hath to nourish a humane Body: Nor did *Nebuchadnezar* eat Grass with the Oxen, until his heart was made like the Beasts. Moreover, the Glory of all things transitory hath not the Civility to see the Soul to its rest: But serve it like wicked Companions, who have debauched a man all the day, and leave him to dry a Kennel at night. O when the Soul shall run out into Eternity, and Death shall draw the Courtain upon all things Worldly, Then it shall be seen, that the things *that are seen*, are but Temporal: And then if the Soul would return to call but for a cup of cold water, of all its sensual Pleasures, it cannot have passage: For there is a great *Gulf* fixed betwixt, *So that they who would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence*, Luk. 16. 26: To close this consideration, Remember that the wise God called him a fool, a great fool, a rich fool; Who, for that his Barns were full, would say to his Soul: *Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry*, Luke 12. 19, 20. But O! the revenue of Godliness: God and the Light of his countenance, Christ and his Merits, the Holy Ghost with his Comforts and Graces, the Justification of Faith, the Peace of God, the Joy of the Holy Ghost, the hope of Glory, are things of great Beauty, to please our Souls withall.

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3. The Consolations, Joyes, Pleasures, and Delights of Godliness are the choicest of any: For however (as the Proverb is) *a small thing will make a fool fain, and as little makes him sad*; Yet the Delights of a Wise man, are such as are the things he delighteth in, *Ps.* 4. 7. *Thou (thorough the light of thy countenance) hast put gladness in my Heart, more than in the time, when their Corn and their Wine increased.* O Lord, I am as far above the envy of the ungodly, as they are below mine. The Worlds great prejudice against Godliness, is, that they fancy it an unpleasant thing, void of delight: But *vitium est in organo*: And no doubt if men found that delight in Holiness, which they do in wickedness, we should quickly have the World a Proselyte to Godliness. O then that my Words were weighed! and that the World would give me a fair hearing but in this one consideration; no doubt, I had then gained. Delight is a very alluring thing, and *trahit sua quemque voluptas*, every one follows whither his Pleasure and Delight leads him. Nor is it any wonder that so it be; for Delight and Pleasure is the very flower and blossome of Happiness, the accomplishment and last act of Blessedness, differing from Vertue and Godliness, as the Flourish from the Tree, the Rose from the Bush. The Scripture placeth the Saints Blessedness, both in the Estate of Grace and Glory, in Pleasure and Delight. That Delight is a mans Blessedness in the state of Grace, see the Command, *Psal.* 37. 4. the Promise *Isai.* 64 5. the Saints professed practice, of whom Christ is the

chief, and chiefly meant, *Psal.* 40. 8. The Motive given by the Spirit of God, *Prov.* 3. 17. And that Delight hath the same place in Glory (if any that have heard of such a thing as Heaven, did ever once doubt of it) it is more than clear from, *Psal.* 16. 11, *Revel.* 21. 4. with many the like places. If men knew to do the *Epicureans* right in their opinion of Felicity, and could speak as Philosophers, and not as taunting Satyricks, I could rather be, than be called an Epicurean: For Imperious custom, (even like *Diotrephes*, who in all things loveth the preheminency) hath usurped so far upon the World, that she prevaileth equally in mens Words and practices, calling things as she lists. Whence a sensual Sow wallowing in the mire of Lust, must bear the name of an Epicurean; whereas, in Truth, an Epicurean is no other than a man placeing Happiness in rational Pleasures and intellectual Delights worthy of men: Even as I, according to the Scripture, have placed it in those Delights that are Spiritual and becoming a Saint. The cutting off of a Member deserves not the name of a Cure, but is the Uncomfortable result of the desperate wits of Extremity and Necessity, in a deplorable Case; and an expedient intending the preservation of the whole, with the loss of the part: For better it is to go to Heaven with one Eye, Hand or Foot, than to be cast into Hell with two. The *Stoical Apathetick* method (if the *Stoick* be not as much wronged as the *Epicurean*) is but a pitiful cutting, at best a curb, no wayes a Cure of a corrupt World. A man will

suffer

suffer much before he suffer the loss of his Limbs: and he hath wrought but an undesirable Cure, that by cutting off of a Member hath made a man creple or maim: The World will want much before they want their Pleasures and Delights: And indeed who would choose to be miserable? Wherefore the only expedient method in this case, will be diversion, whereby men may save their Members; the World may enjoy Delights and Pleasures, for measure as much greater as for quality better, than formerly in their courses of Iniquity; only they must not run any more in the Channel of Sensuality, but in the vein of Religion and Spirituality. Consider then the Delights and Pleasures of Godliness, and then let reason say, who hath the sweetest Life, the Saint or the Bruit.

1. For their nature, they are unspeakable and full of Glory, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. the Word is significant in its own Language χαρα δεδοξασμενη, a *glorifyed joy*; a very Heaven upon Earth: A Joy of the same Nature, though not to the same degree, with that in Heaven. The Saints Delights in Earth, are a cup of the same Wine, for kind, which they shall drink in the Kingdom of their Father, though it be not of so high a colour, nor of so rich a relish to us here in the Cellar, as it is to them at the Kings Table. Holiness is much mistaken in the World, and so is Heaven and Happiness, which is no other, than the top and upper end of Holiness, or Holiness in its Holy-dayes Cloathes. If men would consider this, I suppose

some should be as afraid of Heaven as they are of Holiness: Yea I am really of the mind, if God should open a door in Heaven to a Prophane Liver, and say, Come up hither, that he should not dare to enter: The Beauty and Light of that Glory, so contrary to Darkness, would dazle and confound, and utterly undoe him. If a man should be permitted, yea commanded to throw himself into a burning Fiery Furnace, like that of *Babylon*, durst he yet do it? Yea though he were very cold and never so much needed to be warned. And who among Hypocrites or Prophane Livers *shall dwell with devouring Fire*? Who amongst them shall *dwell with everlasting burnings*? Isa. 33. 14. In a word, men must either say that it is a great Unhappiness to be in Heaven, or that it is their great Happiness to be more Holy.

2. The pleasures and delights of Holiness are of the highest descent, they spring from the rock of Eternity. And O! how pure? how wholsome? how pleasant must they be? The pleasures which God gives his People, have himself for their spring, and life for their vertue. Psal. 36. 8. 9. *with thee is the fountain of life*.

3. They have the deepest root, and so farrest in upon the Soul: as the delights of Hypocrites, Worldlings and prophane persons are but the dreggs; so they are but the scrufe and pairings of pleasures: their pleasures are but Skin-deep: in the midst of all their laughter, the heart is sad: they are as Hypocritical in their delights as in their duties. The Soul and Conscience of a wicked man hath

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nothing like Christ but this, that they are never seen to laugh: they are men of sorrows indeed, and many sorrows are their portion: That is appointed to them of God. *Psal.* 32 10. with *Isai.* 65. 13, 14.

4. The Consolations, Joys, Pleasures, and delights of Godliness are the most strong and efficacious: in the multitude of their frighting, repenting, tempting, doubting and inquiring *thoughts, Gods comforts delight their soul.* Psal, 94. 14. These turn their mourning into dancing, they make them sing in a Prison, and rejoice in tribulation: But Affliction maketh a wicked man soon to forget his pleasures, as waters that pass away: yea and the memory of their former delights, is to their present sorrows, as he that *singeth songs to a heavy heart*, and their song is, *miserum est fuisse felicem*: It is the greatest misery to have once been happy.

5. The delights of Godliness are pure and chast delights, they are such as the Soul enjoys with Gods blessing and approbation, yea with his command. Psal. 37. 4. *delight they self also in the Lord*; the pleasures of Godliness are our duty. And for their *Chastity*, they are like the pleasures that a man hath in the company of his lawful Wife. Prov. 5. 19. *Let her breasts satisfy thee at all times, and be thou ravisht with her love*: the word in its own language is, *Erre* thou always in her love: If a man must play the fool, let him do it lawfully: and if it be an error, it is an innocent one to erre with Gods approbation. But the delights of wickedness are impure, whoorish and strange delights

such as a man hath in the company of a harlot: and "why will thou my son be ravished with a "strange woman, and embrace the bosome of a "stranger? *Prov*, 5. 20.

6. The delights of Godliness are secure and safe delights. This follows from the former. Here the Soul is ridd of all fear of going too far: there is no excess in those pleasures: *Eph.* 5. 18. in wine there is excess: but be filled with the Spirit; there is no excess in that, the more you drink of that the more sober you are: and also in the delights of Godliness, there is no fear of the sad after-claps of sorrow, that conclude sinful pleasures: for *the end* of that mirth is *heaviness*, *Prov.* 14. 13. The ungodly mans sinful pleasures are but a showr-blink that ends in a tempest: their delights are like the pleasures of drunkards, who drink and swill till their head ake, and their heart be sick: and they have their sentence with *Babylon*. *Jer*, 51, 39. "In "their heat I will make their feasts, and I will "make them drunken, that they may rejoice, "and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not awake, saith "the Lord

7. This follows from all that is said, The pleasures and delights of Godliness are constant and induring pleasures. John 16, 33. *your joy no man taketh from you.* As the World doth not give the Saints joy and delight, so neither can it take these from them. The Saints delights in Godliness, are like spring waters that will rise as high as they fall in their courses. As they descend first from Heaven, so they never cease running till they ascend thither

again

again: they are like living running waters, that make what turnings they will, about mountains or whole countreys, in end they fall into the Sea: The River of pure pleasures, that *maketh glad the the City of God*, hath its outgoing into the Sea of that fulness of joy, that is in Gods *presence*, and that ocean *of pleasures that are at his right hand for evermore.* And now I go forth unto the streets and stand in the open places and cry: O all ye who love pleasures turn in hither, tast and see that the Lord is Gracious. I am so litle an enemy to pleasures, and so much an *Epicurean* in opinion (as you see) that if any man shall shew me pleasures more pleasant than those of Godliness, I am content to change for the better: and that shall be when men and beasts make an exchange of Soules; water and wine of natures and vertues; and Heaven and Earth shall change places; when evil shall be good; black shall be white; bitter, sweet; darkness, light; crockedness, straight; heaviness, light; when cold shall be hot; and time shall be Eternal.

4, Godliness is the only perfect, harmonious, and uniforme of all the Soules lovers: what lame and defective pieces are all her companions? I said as much in the description of the inward power of Grace as may shew, how exactly commensurable her perfections are to all the powers, and to the whole capacity of a man: she satisfieth the understanding, will and affections; and exercises the whole man. But of her defective companions, some want the head, as error, superstition, profanness: whatever of the will and affections, and

practise be in these, yet they are against the truth of a well informed judgment: some want the heart as Hypocrisie and formality, whatever of knowledge, profession or practice be in these; yet the will and affections do not consent: some want the hands and feet, and are meer trunks; as all those who pretend to know, will and love their Masters will, but do it not. And for their moral qualifications, The first is a fool; the next is a knave; and the last is a sluggard. But compleat Godliness hath the head, heart, hands and feet, with all the parts of a perfect man: and is a wise, trusty and active piece. And as it is compleat and perfect so it is most uniforme and harmonious. *Ungodliness* is a *City* of *Division*, a *Babel* of Confusion, *it parteth chief friends, and putteth a man at variance with those of his own house*: the wicked are like the *troubled Sea*: their lusts are continually fighting and warring one against another, and altogether against Holiness: whence are Wars and fightings, but from your lusts? *Jam.* 4. 1. Ungodly mens lusts are like themselves, for extremes they are, and they are like extremes that differ alike from themselves and from the mids: Avarice differeth as much from Prodigality her Sister Vice, as from Liberality her contrary vertue. But Godliness sets a man at one with himself: it is a heart-uniting thing. Psal. 86. 11. *unite my heart to fear thy name.* It makes a good understanding betwixt the understanding, the will, the affections, and the whole man. And *blessed be the Peace-maker*, shall she not be *called the Child of God*?

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5. Is it not the great Glory of Godlinefs, that as many do fute her, as few do efpoufe her, and fhe hath as many pretenders, as few matches? Are not all men, her pretenders? Do not her greateft adverfaries pay her the Devotion, at leaft of a complement? Is not their great requeft to her, like that Isai. 4. 1. *only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach?* Do not her greateft enemys Glory to be called her fervants? Call an evil man good, and you cannot pleafe him beeter: for he hateth as much to be *called evil*, as to *be good*; And loveth as much to *be evil*, as to be *called good*. And it is yet as much her Glory that few do enjoy her. But pray, whom doth fhe reject? are they any but the Ungodly? thofe unworthy Perfons that were brought in upon her, and came to mock her: nor doth fhe defpife any that have not firft defpifed her: or fhould fhe proftitute her felf to fuch as care not for her? none get a Rejection from her, without their own confent: and they take it before they get it: for as none are Godly, fo neither are any Wicked againft their will.

Laftly, Befide the promife of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, which makes Godlinefs profitable to all things 1 *Timoth.* 4. 8. It is the ready way, even in ordinary probability, to give a man honour, wealth, and pleafure, and to continue thefe with him, yea even in this World: (I would thefe tymes did give a better teftimony to this Obfervation: but I hope the Obfervation fhall ftand when fome are fallen; and fhall continue, when thefe times are paft way) for that

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these things are as naturally purchased by good and vertuous, as lost by lewd and wicked practices. And how shall a man have Honour, who prostitutes himself to courses wherein he hath none, but base and unmanly persons for his Companions? Are not Pages, Grooms, and Lackeyes, as good fellows as their Lord himself at Whoreing, Drinking, Swearing, Carding, *where all are fellows*? Is not my Lord well Honoured, when he sends his man to convoy a Whore to the Chamber, who (because upon the Road he uses to lead the way for his Master, thinks he will do him the like service here, and) serves him with his own remains? But who doth not Reverence the Presence, and Honour the Face of a really Good man? Yea many a time such an one hath more Reverence than God himself with Evil men, who dare do many things in the Eyes of God, that they will be loath to do in presence of such a man? Yea how convincing many a time is the Carriage of a Godly man to his greatest Enemies? *Surely thou art more Righteous then I* (said *Saul* to *David*) and when *a Mans wayes please the Lord, he maketh even his Enemies to be at peace with him*, Prov. 16. 7. An excellent Divine (I think it is *Greenhame*) sayes well; *Let not a Saint be afraid of Men; for that by his Prayers, he hath more Power of their Hearts, than they themselves have*: And the Scripture sayes the same, 1 *Pet.* 3. 13. *And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good*? And how well had it been with the Profane Ruffian, that he had spent that Time, Strength, Estate, and Credit

lit for God, in the way of Godlines, with the weet and sure gain of his Soul, which he hath vasted in riffling and base living, with the evident hazard of his Soul's ruine, if that may be said to be ruined that was never repaired, nor in case. But be it yet that the godly man attaineth not to these advantages Temporal; The Peace of Righteousnes, the Contentment of Sobernes, the Confidence of Faith, and the Rejoycing of Hope, do more than compense all that is wanting elsewhere, and cause that a good man is satisfied from himself, *Prov.* 14. 14.

Now let all that hath been said, be a reproof of the Worlds hard opinions of Godlines, and give cheque to their unkind dealing with her, as if she were a sorry Piece, to be desired by none, but such as would be miserable. I have not yet travelled so far, but that I can remember from whence I set forth: In my entry upon the point, I told my Erand was with *Eleazar Abraham*'s Servant *Genes.* 24. To seek a Wife to my Master's Son, and to Espouse and bring home Souls to Christ: And now to conclude, Let me with them, *Gen.* 24 57, 58. Call the Damsel, and enquire at her Mouth, *Wilt thou go with the man?* And she said (so be it said unto me) *I will go.*

The fourth and last thing we learn from the point, in a word, is, to put a good construction upon all Gods Dispensations to his People; for his thoughts towards them are *Thoughts of Peace, and not of evil, to give them an expected end*, Jer 29. 11. And in complyance with the Lords great design, in the vi-

viciſſitudes of all our Lots, let us learn to give him more of our Hearts: For he brings his People into the Wilderneſs, and there he allures them. If theſe Melancholly times do but make us more tractable, condeſcending and kind to *Chriſt Jeſus*, we may well expect, that he will ſpeak comfortably unto us.

I will bring her into the Wilneſs, and will ſpeak comfortably unto her.

AND thus I am led by the hand into the fourth and laſt thing propoſed to be conſidered in the Text. The *juncture and coincidence* of the Churches affliction and the Lords *Conſolations*. *I will bring her into the Wilderneſs, and I will ſpeak comfortably unto her.* Hence the Doctrine is, That the Lord uſeth to tryſt his peoples ſadeſt afflictions with his ſweeteſt conſolations. He is a God that comforteth thoſe that art caſt down: It is his way and uſe, The Apoſtle 2 *Cor.* 1. 5. *abounded in conſolations by Chriſt, as their ſufferings for Chriſt abounded.* And reading through all the Scripture, I never find the Saints more indulged with the ſweet conſolations of God and his kind manifeſtations, than in the greateſt afflictions. Reaſons of this are, 1. His free love and kindneſs. So it becomes him *with whom the fatherleſs find mercy*: He loveth and preſerveth the Stranger, he is a Father of the Fatherleſs, and a Husband to the Widow, a Judge of the oppreſſed out of his holy habitation: He will be known in adverſity to be a Friend. 2. Their neceſſity: Then they need conſolations, and then they come in ſeaſon: Prov. 30. 6. *Wine should be given to thoſe that are of heavy hearts*: *When I ſaid my foot ſlippeth, thy mercy Lord held me up*, This was a mercy that came in good ſeaſon. 3. Their fitneſs: As then they moſt need con-

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solations, so then are they fittest to receive and intertain them. The Lord will not have his Consolations to run by and be spilt, by pouring them out into full vessels: But *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst, for they shall be filled.* I spoke before upon the second part of the Text, how afflictions fits for consolations; and that therefore, God sometimes brings his people into the Wilderness, that thus he may fit them.

Most sweet are the Consolations wherewith the Lord trysts his people in their afflictions. 1. He draws forth to them the bowels of most tender compassions. In *all their affliction he is afflicted,* Isa. 63. 9. Jer. 31. 20. *Since I spoke against him, I do earnestly remember him still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him,* Zach. 2. 8. *He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.* It is a very acceptable consolation to an afflicted person, to mourn with them, and to be touched with their condition: And the Lord cryes *alas* at every touch of affliction that comes upon people: Nor need they fear he shall forget them: For whatever is a mans pain, it will not fail to put him in mind.

2. He owns them and takes notice of them, when others slight them and care not for them, *Psal.* 31. 7. *He knows their Soul in Adversities,* Psal. 142. 4, 5. *I looked on my right hand and beheld, but there was no man that would know me, refuge failed me: No man cared for my Soul: I cryed unto thee O Lord, I said thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living,* Jer 30. 16, 17. and forward: The Lord promises with great Mercies to owne his Church, because in the 17 verse, *They called her an out-cast, saying, this is* Zion *whom no man seeketh after,* Lament. 1. 12. *It was nothing to those that passed by,* to see all that she suffered. But her desire is frequently throughout the Chapter, Behold O Lord for I am in distress. Yea and he will behold, *For his eyes behold the things that are equal,* Act. 7. 34. *I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people, which is in* Egypt, *and I have heard their groaning.* This is a time, wherein there be few to Resent the wrongs done to the Church of God and his Saints and Servants, and fewer there be to right them: And therefore that Prayer is good, *Psal.* 17. 2. *Let my Sentence come forth from thy presence: Let thine eyes behold the things that are equal:* And the Saints may have justice for the asking: For he

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Beholds mischief and spight, to requite it with his hand, P 1, 10. 14.

3. He vouchsafes them a more special presence, *Ps.* 91. 15. *I will be with him in trouble*, Psal. 23. 4. *In the valley of the shadow of death thou art with me*, Isai. 43. 2. When thou passest through the Waters I will be with thee, *&c.* The Lord is ever near to those that fear him: but in affliction he goes very near them. They have alwayes his special presence, *Ps.* 140. 13. *The upright shall dwell in thy presence.* But in trouble they have a more special presence. His presence is either a secret supporting presence, whereby his people are held up, they know not how: For many a time when the Saints look back upon those times, wherein they said, *their strength and their hope is perished from the Lord*, and see the way that they have come, they wonder how they have win through: *But God was with them whilst they knew it not.* Or else his presence is a manifest comforting presence, and that the Scripture calls his *visiting of his people.*

4. Then the Lord vouchsafes his afflicted people many a kind visit: And in those visits, 1. He salutes his people with Peace: *He will speak Peace unto his people, and to his Saints: in the world ye shall have trouble* (sayes he) *but in me ye shall have* Peace. 2. He gives a hearing to all his peoples Confessions, Complaints and Petitions: *Lord thou hast heard the desire of the humble.* 3. He speaks his mind to his people, both concerning their Duty and the issue of their lot. The times of the Lords visits to his afflicted people, are the times wherein he communicates most of his secrets to those that fear him. The Soul that goes through manyfest afflictions, is ordinarily the wisest and most experienced Soul: *Heman* the *Ezrahit*, who was so sore afflicted, even from his youth, was one of the wisest men in his time. Speculation speaks of cases like a Geographer, Experience speaks like a Traveller: That sayes that which *our ears have heard*, this sayes, *that which our eyes have seen, declare we unto you.* 4. In his Visits, he gives his people tokens for good: He comes never empty-handed to them, But gives them such things, whereof they may say in their straits, when he seems to have forgotten them, *Lord whose are these?* 5. And further (as the original hath the words of the Text) he *speaks to his peoples heart*: He satisfies them concerning his Dispensations, and convinceth them of the

the equity and kindness of his dealing with them. He gives them such rational accounts of his dispensations, as makes them say, he hath taken the best way with them, and makes them sing, *thou hast dealt well with thy Servants*, Ps. 119. 65. And by convincing them that good is the Word of the Lord, *Isai.* 39. 8. He makes them say from their Heart, that if variety of lots were in their offer, they would choose the present: O but that speaks well: I will speak to her heart: I will even speak as she would have me. Thus he comforts by his kind visits.

5. He comforts his people in affliction, by being all things to them, and doing all things for them. Thus we find the Saints in their afflictions making applications to God, with Titles suted to their condition: And *it is God* (saith the *Psalmist*) *that doth all things for me.* He is the *Shepherd* of *Israel*: If they be scattered, he gathers them: if they go astray, he leads them; if they want, he feeds them, and *makes them Lie in green Pastures, by the still waters*: If they be in hazard, *He is their refuge*: Are they sad? He *is the Health of their countenance*: Are they weak or weary? *He is their strength*, and with him is everlasting strength: Are they sinners and guilty? He is *the God of their Righteousness*: Is Law intended against them? He *pleads their cause*; and *stands at their right hand*: Is the judge an unfriend to them? *He is their judge, and their Sentence cometh forth from his presence*: Do Kings or others command them to be Afflicted, Fined, Beaten, Imprisoned, Confined, Banished? Then *Psal.* 44. 4. *Thou art my King O God, command deliverances for* Jacob: Have they no Friends, nor any to do for them? He that is the kind Lord can cause men shew them *the kindness of the Lord*: That which the Scripture calleth *the kindness of the Lord.* 1 Sam. 20. 14. hath as much in it, as may shew us, that the Lord, makes men Instruments at his pleasure, to shew kindness, and do a good Office to his people. And when the Saints and Servants of God come to count kindness, I hope there will be found more of the kindness of the Lord, than of men, in Courtesies that are done them. I am so little a Patron of unthankfulness, That I shall thank him kindly, and pray (as our *Scots* Proverb is) *The Lord reward him that doth me good, whether with his will, or against it.* But truly when from men

men I meet with less kindness, where I might have expected more; and more where I might have expected less; The Meditation of this Scripture expression, *To shew the kindness of the Lord,* hath taught me the more earnestly to ask mercies of my God, and to leave the expressing and dispensing of it to himself, by Means and Instruments of his own choosing: He can make a *Babylonian* Enemy to intreat his own Servant *Jeremiah* well.

6. To add no more, for that hath all, The Lord comforteth his afflicted People by *Christ Jesus,* 2 Cor. 1. 5. This is the Saints unchangeable Consolation, in all changes of Dispensations: and truly our Consolations will come to a poor account, if Christ be not the sum of them all, in all Cases and Conditions: *Christless comforts* will leave us *comfortless Christians.*

The Use of this point shall be, for strong *Consolation* to the Saints in their greatest afflictions. The Lord hath laid it straitly upon us, to comfort his People in their afflictions, *Isai.* 40. 1. 2. and here, he takes it upon himself to be their Comforter: He hath given this Name and Office to his Holy Spirit, *The Comforter*; and shall not the afflicted People of God with these words be comforted, and comfort one another? But according to the rule of Scripture, Comforts and Duties must be matched together: Nor must we expect in the event a Separation of those things, that God hath joyned in the intimation. Wherefore, if we would have much of the Lords heart, Let us give him much of ours: If we would have him comfortable to us, we must be kind to him: If we would have him speak comfortably to us, we must give our consent to him: If we would have him speak to our Heart, we must *be to his Heart*: for so the Text runneth, *Therefore behold I will allure her, I will bring her into the Wilderness, and I will speak comfortably unto her.* Now to the God of all Consolation, *Father, Son,* and *Holy Ghost, be all Glory, and Dominion, and Praise, for ever and ever.* Amen.

Written in the Wilderness 1665.

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